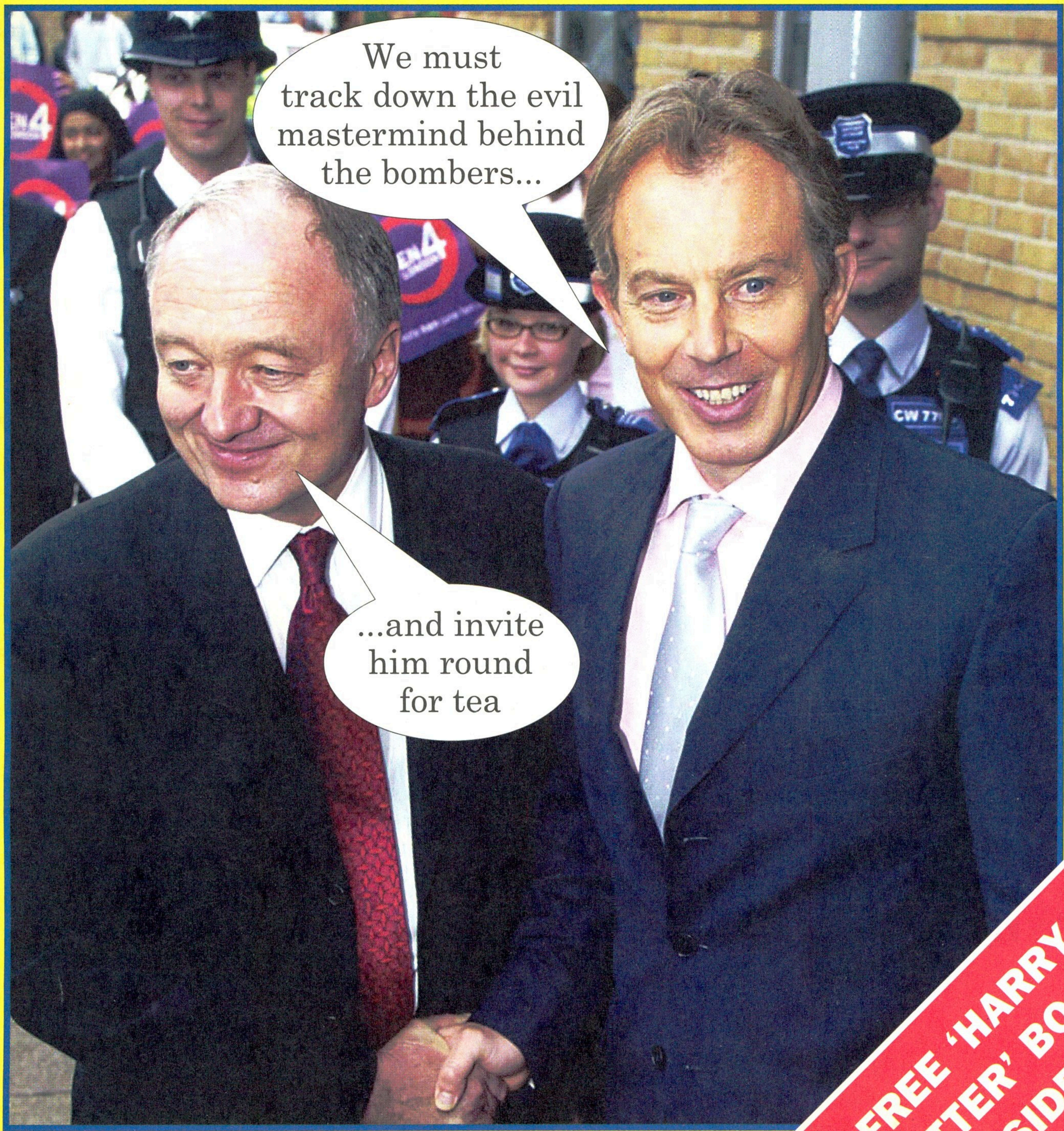
PRIVATE EYE

No. 1137
22 July –
4 August 2005
£1.40

BRITAIN GETS TOUGH



FREE 'HARRY POTTER' BOOK INSIDE*

When information moves swiftly, your organisation can too with BT's networked IT services.

In the digital networked economy, convergence of IT and communications is now becoming a reality. However, with more ways of interacting than ever before, bringing together all your devices, networks and applications can be complex.

With BT's networked IT services you can integrate and simplify your communications, improving efficiency and helping your organisation to be more competitive. By combining your voice, data and mobile applications in an integrated network environment, your people will be able to collaborate in real time and respond faster.

To discover more about how BT's networked IT services can help your organisation thrive, go to **bt.com/networkedIT**

BT

More power to you

Private Eye Rapped For 'White, Middle-Class' Bias

A NEW report has found that the satirical magazine Private Eye is guilty of an institutional prejudice in favour of directing its attacks on white, middle-class targets.

Says the Eye's Board of Governors, "There has been little effort to reflect the fact that Britain is now a multi-cultural society. Despite the changes that have taken place in Britain in recent years, the magazine continues to produce jokes about politicians, journalists and lawyers who are all predominantly male, white, middle-class and able-bodied."

The report cited as evidence an analysis of 25 'desert island' jokes carried by the magazine in the past five years. "In not one case," said the report, "was the castaway sitting under the palm tree depicted as disabled or of ethnic origin."

The report continued by pointing out that the "message in a bottle", traditional in this type of cartoon, was not once shown as being written in Gujarati, Urdu, Turkish, Albanian or Mandarin.

Said Lord Gnome, the magazine's proprietor, "We welcome this report and will be putting its recommendations into practice. In future my editors have been instructed to ensure that their satirical comment embraces the whole spectrum of today's vibrant, inclusive, multiplex Britain."

WHAT YOU WILL SEE NO. 1.

★ **Cover offer subject to availability. Sadly there are no books available. Lord Gnome**

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. Tel: 020 7437 4017.
Fax: 020 7437 0705. Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk
http://www.private-eye.co.uk

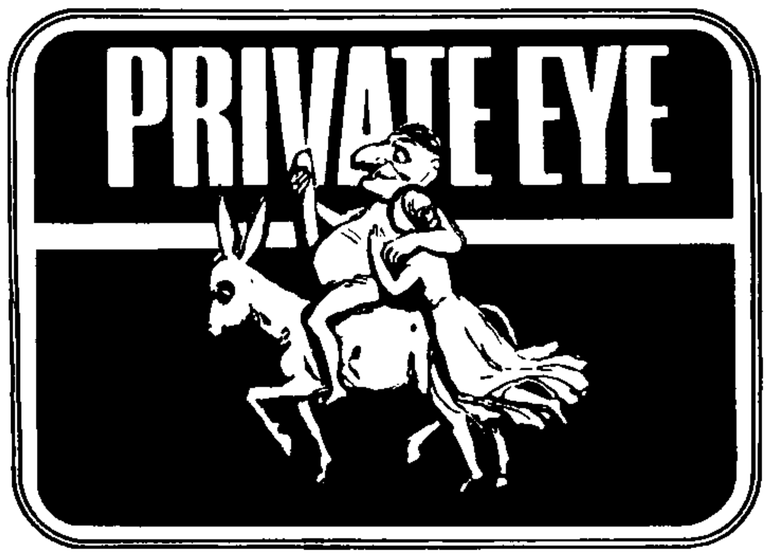
PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 0870 750 1714 or 01795 414 871
Overseas: +44 (0) 1795 414 870 Fax: 01795 414 555.
Books: 0870 750 1712 **Web:** www.private-eye.co.uk
Email: private-eye@galleon.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£21 per annum. Europe and Eire £29. Airmail (rest of world) £38. Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
Display: 020 7878 2303 Classified: 020 7240 9129

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ . **Distributed** by P.E. Distributions, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. 020 7437 4017.

ABC



HOW JOURNALISM WORKS

"THE Hush Hour" was the emotive headline the *Daily Mail* splashed across an astonishing picture of a central line tube carriage the day after the bomb attacks on London, empty except for one sleeping woman – evidence, according to the paper, that "24 hours on, London looks like a ghost town."

Readers of the same day's *Independent*, meanwhile, were treated to a picture of an identical central line tube carriage from an almost identical angle – the difference being that this one was so full of people that several had to stand, beautifully demonstrating the paper's point that "defiance and necessity persuade commuters to go back to the office".

The moral? Every picture tells a story – and if it isn't the one you want, there'll be another one along in a minute...

JUST FANCY THAT!

"**The Twisted Logic of Galloway**: George Galloway was condemned yesterday for claiming London had 'paid the price' for Tony Blair's decision to go to war in Iraq and Afghanistan. In an ill-timed intervention, the former Labour MP blamed the Prime Minister for turning Britain into a prime terrorist target."

– Daily Mail, *July 8, page 7.*

"We knew it was coming. In our hearts, every thinking person in Britain has known that Al Qaeda would launch a terrorist attack on this country. The price for being America's foremost ally, for joining President Bush's Iraq adventure, was always likely to be paid in London, in innocent blood."

– *Max Hastings,* Daily Mail, *July 8, page 18.*

Big Ben sounded the three quarter hour from the other end of Whitehall and then you could almost hear a pigeon dropping as the white envelope was torn open 6,750 miles away in Singapore.

Daily Mail

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

THE legal action for greater compensation by former Railtrack shareholders appears to overlook two simple principles of the stock market and capitalism. Shares can go down as well as up – and when a company runs out of money it has no right to be bailed out by the taxpayer who received no benefits from the dividends or the profits when the shares, privatised at 190p, rose to £17.

The government agreed to pay some 250p a share in compensation – more than the taxpayer received at privatisation in 1996. If Railtrack could not survive without injections of public cash, why should shareholders receive anything?

ANALYSIS OF THE WEEK

"The fear is that if a suicide bomber can strike once, he or she can strike again."

– *Mark Simpson,* RTE News at One, *13 July.*

Rowling news...

- **Everyone a loser: Olympics Hackwatch** 5
- **Agony Aunties: Widdy and the BBC** 8
- **GWOT latest: Letter from Washington** 16
- **Making Beardie History; ID cards; Lord Birt, the blue-sky stinker: In the Back** 25-27
- **Funding global terror: Slicker** 28, 29

BUSH GETS TOUGH

GUNS & RUSES

"DEVELOPMENT of international standards in arms transfers, including a common understanding of government's responsibilities, would be an important step towards tackling the undesirable proliferation of conventional arms. We agree on the need for further work to build a consensus for action."

It wasn't much of a commitment; but tucked away in the G8's *Africa: An historic opportunity* agreement was the result of foreign secretary Jack Straw's efforts towards a new arms trade treaty. Arms campaigners were disappointed, especially since a new arms trade treaty preventing weapons from reaching appalling regimes was a key recommendation of Tony Blair's Commission for Africa. The statements following June's foreign ministers' meeting and the summit itself committed nobody to anything at all.

One week later, at the UN in New York, came the perfect opportunity to develop those important international standards, as plans for tracking small arms via international recording of serial numbers, came up for public debate after four years of diplomatic wrangling. Most countries back a legally binding system for marking weapons and ammunition casings – spent cartridges being the most likely evidence at the scene of atrocities.

What the UN put forward was a draft for a voluntary system excluding ammunition. Why? A few countries aren't happy with the idea of a stronger agreement – among them, G8-member and signatory to that Africa agreement, the US. Will it show the same commitment to other "promises" made at Gleneagles?

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"People always say that it is never enough, but you find that these things are always said by the people who are not actually getting their hands dirty trying to make things better."

– Tony Blair complains about post-G8 carping by, er, those pesky aid agencies who keep their hands clean by providing food aid, education, medical treatment, disaster relief, etc. etc.

Street of Shame

THE front page of the *Sunday Hellograph* is a crowded place these days, largely given over to promoting lifestyle features and celeb interviews to be found inside the new-look paper. But on 10 July, squeezed alongside the most important announcements ("The permanent dieter: new column by Rebecca Tyrrel", "The truth about me and Pete Doherty, by Peaches Geldof"), space was found for a news story – an exclusive, no less.

"'Foreign terrorist cell' was behind London bombings," it revealed. According to the *Telegraph*'s top-level sources, the bomb attacks "were the work of a 'very, very small number' of individuals who arrived from mainland Europe or North Africa on false passports within the past six months". Oh dear.

"SCUM cash in on dying kids," shrieked an outraged *News of the World* on the morning after Live 8.

It appeared over the shocking news that "vile touts were caught cashing in on Live 8 yesterday – making a fast buck off the backs of Africa's dying children. Our undercover team of reporters mingling with the queues around Hyde Park were offered scores of free tickets for up to a staggering £300 each. One girl tout said: 'Stuff the concert and what it's in aid of. Just give me the money'." What fools! Didn't they know the cash isn't in pushing tickets before the concert, but in flogging dodgy merchandise afterwards? Indeed, one enterprising spiv has set up a profitable sideline selling snaps of Bono, Robbie Williams, Pink Floyd and the like snapped by professional press photographers on stage in Hyde Park, and printed on a range of formats ranging from a very reasonable £9.99 for a mousemat to £25 for a door-size poster, or £16.99 for a matching mug and coaster set.

His name? Er, Rupert Murdoch… whose online shop where one can purchase these goodies is easily accessible via the websites of the *Times*, *Sun* or *News of the World*.

THE *Daily Telegraph*'s Mihir Bose, never a reporter to use one personal pronoun in a piece when three can be shoe-horned in, asked just one question at the press conference in Singapore after London was chosen to host the 2012 Olympics.

"Seb," said Bose, clearly on first-name terms with Lord Coe, "what impact did the *Telegraph*'s support for the London bid have on the outcome of the vote?"

HAVING been one of only two UK papers to fall for the infamous fake picture of John Kerry alongside Jane Fonda on an anti-Vietnam war platform only last year, one might think the *Mail on Sunday* would be wary of printing obvious forgeries in its pages. But not so the day after Live 8.

Apparently unimpressed by the 200,000 crowd which actually was in London's Hyde Park, editor Peter Wright opted to fill his entire front page with an extraordinarily badly-faked shot in which large chunks of the crowd – banners, flags and all – were repeated two or three times in an effort to fill up the large empty area between the stage and the security barriers.

Sadly the paper's photoshop goblins did not think to adjust the size of the groups of people which they were dropping into the empty spaces, with the result that the crowd appeared to consist of hordes of tiny children interspersed with occasional clumps of giants – including some distant figures near the stage who must have been at least 20 or 30ft tall.

"My wife thinks I'm at the Spectator play"

"DROP Blair for Brown? No thanks," thundered Peter McKay in his Daily Mail column on 11 July, over an astonishing paean of praise for the way in which the prime minister had "bounced back" in the wake of "a trio of triumphs" – the Olympic victory, the G8 negotiations and his response to the London bombings.

"In the view of Brown supporters, Blair has risen like Dracula to threaten their pure, morally-superior hero," McKay noted approvingly.

Alas! One of the most fervent and Van-Helsingish Brown supporters is *Daily Mail* editor Paul Dacre, who has proclaimed that the chancellor has "the mantle of greatness" upon him, and in return received a thorough Brown-nosing at a dinner in his honour last year, when our man at number 11 praised the editor's "great distinctiveness, his warmth".

McKay, his long service and supposedly independent voice as a columnist notwithstanding, was duly hauled into his boss's office for what *Mail* staff describe affectionately as one of Dacre's "double-cuntings".

Meanwhile McHackey is looking for a new number two on the *Mail*'s Ephraim Hardcastle column following the defection of gorgeous pouting Katherine Bergen to the Sun. The most surprising candidate, who is to be given a try-out next month, is Petronella "Petsy" Wyatt.

She must be a forgiving – or perhaps a forgetful – type. For several years before her affair with Boris Johnson was finally exposed, McKay ran countless items taunting Boris for "mentoring" Petsy.

But will Petsy's fragile disposition cope with the strain of a daily job? During a previous stint at the *Telegraph*'s Peterbore diary in the 1990s, Petsy's formidable Hungarian mother Verushka once rang to say that Petsy couldn't come to work because "it's too windy".

Another time Lady Wyatt rang to say that "my daughter is very ill and cannot come in today". This puzzled Peterbore editor Robert Hardman, who pointed out that Petsy was already at her desk beside him. "Oh dear, I forgot!" Verushka wailed. "It's tomorrow that Petronella will be ill."

This afternoon The Queen, Patroness, and The Duke of Edinburgh were entertained to Lunch at Queens' College by the President (the Lord Eatwell).

Daily Telegraph

CONGRATULATIONS to Tony Hall of Bishops Cleeve, Gloucestershire, who won last week's "PictureLine" competition in the *Times* by providing the speech bubble "Make Doherty History" for a photo taken backstage at Live 8.

If *Times* staff want to save themselves the cost of a Fujifilm Mini7 instant camera each week, they might consider cutting out the middleman and copying their winning entry straight from the cover of the *Eye* themselves?

THE *Daily Telegraph*, now known as the *Maily Telegraph* for its hilarious attempts to ape the *Daily Mail*, has decided what will bring new readers flocking: gorgeous pouting picture bylines.

Hence the extraordinary photo of diarist Celia Walden, apparently still in her *negligee*, that now adorns her column. Disgracefully, executives have ordered that there will be no equivalent pic (indeed no pic at all) on days when her deputy, Jonathan Isaby, is in charge. Not pretty enough, apparently.

Elsewhere on the op ed page, columnist Mark Steyn was also given a makeover last week. But he seemed strangely ungrateful for being made to look ten years younger.

His personal assistant, Tiffany Cole, dispatched an instant protest to the paper from Steyn's retreat in New Hampshire: "Mark was very distressed to see today's *Telegraph*. It is not acceptable to use byline pictures in which his head has been badly grafted on to someone else's (too narrow, sloping shoulders) and necktie. If the picture we sent is not acceptable, please return to using the old one until we have a new one done. But Mark will not write under a fraudulent byline picture, so please confirm that you will no longer use this shoddy fake."

The article by Steyn that appeared under the offending picture was about Islam and terrorism. But what do such trifles matter beside the far graver problem of being portrayed with sloping shoulders?

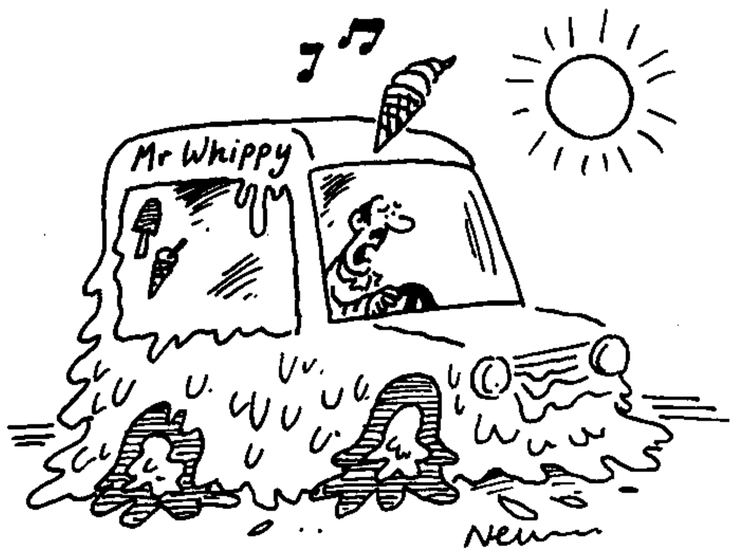
ON 4 July, the *Media Guardian* website ran a diary-item about the previous night's River Cafe quiz which was won by a team put together by Piers "Morgan" Moron representing the *Press Gazette*.

"The organisers… were astonished when Morgan arrived with his team, none of whom had any apparent connection with the magazine," it noted. "In particular, its editor, the long-suffering Ian Reeves, was snubbed in favour of Shaun Wallace, a barrister from Wembley better known as the winner of the 2004 Mastermind competition… Morgan's other team-mates – the *Independent*'s Simon Kelner, the *Observer*'s Roger Alton and a librarian from the *Mirror* – looked suitably sheepish as the brain-on-legs ringer Wallace single-handedly romped home with the trophy. There was unprecedented booing as Morgan strolled up to pick up the silver cup…"

Roger Alton was unimpressed by the story. "That's just bollocks, that's written by Alan Rusbridger, that is," he yelled. "He's obviously pissed off because we beat his team. There's no way Wallace could have won single-handedly."

Showing the comradely spirit that has long characterised relations between the *Observer* and its daily sister-paper, Alton added: "Anyway, the important thing is that we won and beat all those middle-class wankers."

"He refuses to accept the new tabloid times"



"Oh no – my ice-cream van's melting"

IT IS proving an expensive summer for Richard "Dirty" Desmond.

Two weeks ago he parted company with Maninder Gill, Northern and Shell's company secretary and legal director, after the appeal court ordered Dirty Des's *OK!* to pay back £2m in damages and costs to *Hello!*, the latest phase in their interminable struggle over Catherine Zeta Jones's wedding photos.

Since Gill knows where all Des's bodies are buried, it is important to keep him quiet: the Singapore-born lawyer apparently left with a golden wheelbarrow carrying a sum not far short of £5m.

On top of that the *Daily Express* has belatedly agreed to compensate thousands of readers who applied for "£10 cruises" in a disastrous travel promotion last year.

To recoup the missing millions, Desmond has embarked on a cost-cutting campaign that will hardly make a dent in the massive hole created by these fiascos. Measures include *Daily Star* reporters using old desk diaries for notebooks and the Sunday edition of the *Star* recycling Beau Peep cartoon strips from five years ago. The *Star*'s Saturday TV mag (weekly editorial budget: a staggering £850) is being down-paged even further, and soon will carry only listings and fee-free pictures from the *Express* and *Star* archives.

Oh, and the titles' Manchester office is being closed with its seven-strong staff being sent to Broughton, near Preston. This will save Dirty Des £15,000 a year in office rent but leaves the reporters and photographers 30 miles from where the action is – Manchester city centre, where Granada TV studios and Old Trafford provide most of the copy and pictures for his northern editions.

Dirty Des's most ingenious wheeze, however, was a phone poll (at his usual extortionate rates) asking *Star* readers if they thought Live 8 would help solve Africa's problems. Never one to look a gift horse in the mouth, the philanthropic Desmond even saw an opportunity to ease his own debt-burden by exploiting the world's biggest-ever free concert!

JUST FANCY THAT

ON THE left is a historic photo of the Beatles rattling their Oxfam collecting tins, currently being used in a promotion by the charity. But, er, isn't something missing?

Another photo from the same session reveals that standing next to John Lennon was a Fifth Beatle, who later had a successful solo career with such legendary hits as "Paperback Writer", "Money (That's What I Want)", "With a Little Help From My Friends" and of course "Help!" Why has Oxfam cropped him out?

HACKWATCH: OLYMPIC RECORDS

15 January 2003: What are the chances of London being chosen to host the 2012 Olympics? "About as likely as a British athlete winning weightlifting gold," sneers Mary Ann Sieghart in the Times, showing hitherto unsuspected talents as a sports pundit. "There is no point in bidding unless we have a serious chance of winning. And we don't."

23 January: *Daily Mirror* sports columnist Mick Dennis mocks those "deluded souls" who draw encouragement from the IOC president's comment to Tessa Jowell that London could be a strong contender. "What did they expect him to say? He is hardly like to come up with the truth, which would be: 'Look Tess, if you want to spend millions bidding, we'll attend all your presentations… then we'll give the Games to New York or Paris'."

10 July 2004: Veteran *Daily Mail* sports-wallah Ian Wooldridge demands that Britain abandon its Olympic bid at once. "What damage will it do to our capital and nation if London doesn't stage the Games? In this one there are no silver medals for coming second. There will be scorn and national embarrassment. There will be inquests and recriminations about where it all went wrong." But isn't there a chance that London might win? Apparently not. "In fact," Wooldridge boasts, "from the outset, I took a bet of £1,000 of my money to £10 of his with the chief executive of the British Olympic Association that London wouldn't get the Games."

20 November: London's bid was formally launched yesterday. "A great deal of propaganda will be dumped on us making people believe that London can and will win," Matthew Engel notes in the *Financial Times* – but he won't fall for it. "On the Underground there are window stickers inviting us to 'Back the Bid' by sending a text, though it is not clear to whom or why; and last week the campaign was a centrepiece of the Lord Mayor's Show. We do, however, know what comes after the Lord Mayor's Show, and I believe the dustcart will arrive in July when the 2012 Olympics will be awarded to Paris."

11 December: "I think it is inevitable," former sports minister Kate Hoey tells the *Independent*, "that in the next six months there will be hype about the London Olympic bid and how we are going to win it by miles. And the inevitability is that Paris will win."

1 January 2005: Matthew Beard of the *Independent* kicks off the new year with a red-hot scoop. "Tony Blair will miss the vote to decide which city stages the Olympic Games in 2012, denting London's chances of success." The prime minister cannot attend the IOC meeting in Singapore because it coincides with the start of the G8 summit in Gleneagles, and Olympic experts reckon that his absence "could be critical".

5 January: With six months to go, the decision is already a foregone conclusion, according to the two experts consulted by the *Times*. "Paris will win because they have good facilities and they have run big events in the recent past," writes Andrew Jennings, author of *Lords of the Rings*. "And of course, you've got the Iraq issue. If you want to go and bomb part of the Arab world, you can't then expect people to vote for you." Peter Berlin, sports editor of the *International Herald Tribune*, agrees. "Athens gave the IOC a nasty scare – all that political infighting and the last-minute completion of the facilities. That is why Paris will get it. You know that if the French say they're going to do something, then they will."

22 January: "As London's Olympic bid staggers on to certain defeat," declares the Indie's venerable sports pundit James Lawton, "some of its more enthusiastic cheer leaders should consider themselves lucky not to have been hauled to the Tower."

30 January: "Olympic Bid in Tatters," screams the *Observer*'s front-page story by sports correspondent Denis Campbell. "London has in effect abandoned hope of winning the 2012 Olympic Games, because it is so far behind rival Paris," he reveals. An unnamed "key strategist" tells Campbell: "Paris is so strong that it can't be beaten."

21 February: After a four-day visit to London by IOC bigwigs, a long feature in the *Birmingham Post* assesses Britain's chances. "Why Our Olympic Bid is Destined to Fail… Despite the protestations of Lord Coe, London or England just hasn't got a hope."

23 April: James Lawton of the *Independent* is unwavering. His latest diatribe is headlined: "Why a London Olympics is Still a Generation Away."

27 April: The *Mirror*'s chief sportswriter, Oliver Holt, is amazed by London's "monumental error of offering 'incentives' to competing nations". Thanks to this shameless bribery, which had to be hastily withdrawn, "all the ground London had made up has now been lost. Barring the publication of some 'incentives' of their own, Paris is home free."

11 June: In the *FT*, Matthew Engel complains that British hacks have "given their critical faculties a holiday" in reporting that London may be gaining on Paris. By running headlines such as "Revitalised London neck and neck with Paris" and "London surges in race", they are grievously misleading the public. The truth, Engel says, is that London's chances are almost nil: "As the *FT* quietly pointed out the other day, the bookmaker Ladbrokes had just shortened Paris to 6-1 on, which is moving close to dead-cert territory."

4 July: "It's an irritating thing," Matthew Norman writes in the London *Evening Standard*, "but however much one loathes the idea of the Olympics coming here, with all the attendant chaos, it's impossible to suppress a surge of patriotic hope. In this, it's much like watching Tim Henman. My strong suspicion is that the bid will go the way of Tim's Wimbledon dream and that talk of London surging past Paris in the home straight is desperate hype mingled with wishful thinking."

10 July: Whoops! The *Observer* has a special eight-page supplement celebrating Britain's successful Olympic bid. The 10,000-word article begins: "It was criticised, written-off and sometimes mocked." Indeed it was, particularly by the *Observer*'s own Denis Campbell – though the paper omits to mention this. So who has written today's piece, hailing the London campaign as a "triumphant mix of seduction, politicking and inspiration"? None other than Denis Campbell.

As we reported in the last *Eye*, 15 hacks are due to be made redundant at the *Observer* soon. Will one more now be added to the list?

O·B·N

"I was completely open to learning about different aspects of Scientology... and I believe in a lot of it... I admire Tom's overwhelming positivity and his need to inspire people to do more. Tom is the closest thing I think we have to a perfect human being. He really has created himself into an almost super human being. He deserves everything that he wants and has in his life."

JUSTIN CHATWIN (on Tom Cruise), USA Today

Submitted by Alan Greenwood

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

CONSPIRACY CORNER

SOON after the first three bombs exploded across London's underground network at 8:50 on the morning of 7 July, the conspiracy theorists swung into action.

One rumour which circulated widely during the day – and, despite a clear denial from Met deputy assistant commissioner Brian Paddick at 3pm that afternoon, continues to do so on the internet, helped along by credulous reports in the *New Zealand Herald* and Canada's *Globe and Mail* – was that a fifth suicide bomber had been shot by police snipers in Canary Wharf at 10:30am.

This seems to have sprung from an intercontinental game of Chinese whispers started by one office worker calling friends in New Zealand with a second-hand story after noticing the increased police presence on the ground following the earlier bombs and being instructed to move away from the windows – a standard security procedure at times of increased threat since the IRA bombed the building in 1996.

The theory appears to be that the police agreed to "hush up" the incident because of a pending massive Asian investment in the Canary Wharf area – though no one has yet managed to explain why a) this would be more of a deterrent to potential investors than the four other suicide bombings they freely admit occurred in the capital that day; b) why the police would agree not to tell anyone about an attack they did successfully manage to prevent; and c) how the entire incident went unnoticed by any of the 8,000 people in the tower at the time, many of them journalists in the offices of four national newspapers which overlook the area in which it supposedly happened.

ANOTHER rumour which has circulated widely is that Israeli finance minister Benjamin Netanyahu received prior warning of the bombs via the Israeli embassy and therefore declined to attend a conference in London that day.

This was based partly on an erroneous report from an "official at the embassy" which appeared on the Associated Press wire service, and partly on the determination of anti-semites to believe, just as they did with an equal lack of evidence after the 9/11 attacks in New York, that Jews were warned to vacate the area prior to an attack set up by Zionists keen to demonise Muslims.

This theory is rather hard to square with the fact that the meeting Netanyahu was scheduled to attend was the Israeli Opportunity 2005 conference organised jointly by the Israeli Embassy and the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, and it was taking place at the Great Eastern Hotel almost directly above the bomb which exploded near Liverpool Street station, which meant that there was actually a significantly higher number of Jews than usual in the area when the bomb exploded.

Netanyahu, however, was not there – as the conference's schedule shows, he was not due to deliver his speech until 9.30, which meant that he had just left his own hotel to make his way to the Great Eastern when he received news of the explosion at Liverpool Street, at about the same time as everyone else, 9.15, when TV and radio stations began reporting it.

Unsurprisingly, his security guards decided to turn back. The unnamed official had simply muddled his times in the confusion (much as everyone else did: the police did not even realise the underground blasts had been simultaneous until the following day), and AP duly withdrew the claim – not that this stopped the *Daily Express* and *Mail on Sunday* from reporting it over the weekend, the latter under the spectacularly misleading headline "'No Alert' claim is thrown into doubt".

THOSE who prefer their conspiracy theories served up in Sylvie Krin-style prose would do well to check out the ramblings of Michael James, a self-styled "British freelance journalist with a wealth of experience in sniffing out illegal MI6 activities in Germany" whose account of events on 7/7 is currently hosted on a number of websites.

"Blair caught a glimpse of himself in the dresser and checked his profile. Carole, his personal image advisor, had told him to soften the pronounced jaw when seated next to Bush. 'You're overdoing the Winston thing,' she had said pointedly. 'Killing people was yesterday; starving Africans and rainforests is now the thing.' She was wrong about the killing, of course. The good Miz Caplin would never understand his rites of passage, at least not in the Brethren's sense of the term."

Yes, that's right, it was all those pesky freemasons (interestingly, also David Icke's preferred suspects), who apparently number among their ranks Blairs Tony and Ian, Eliza Manningham-Buller of MI5, Netanyahu and Jack Straw. Or it was the four young Muslims whose bodies were actually found with the explosives. Take your pick.

PROVING that both sides in a conflict can be equally bonkers, however, Joel Leyden of the "Israel News agency", a blog site which claims to "correct biased distorted news", demanded to know "Has Islamic Terrorism bought the BBC?"

Incensed by the corporation's decision to refer to the terrorists as "bombers", the former *Jerusalem Post* reporter pointed out that the mere fact that there was absolutely no evidence of Osama Bin Laden having "invested millions" in the publicly-owned broadcaster was no proof that he hadn't. "The BBC… executives are from the green forests of London," he pointed out, demanding "what is it going to take to get the BBC to stop siding with terrorists? IRA 'separatists' to blow up their building in London?"

Leyden appears to be unaware that they did exactly that in March 2001. And just for the record, the BBC called them "dissidents".

***EYE* 1134 reported how spending commitments on tens of billions of pounds worth of "on balance sheet" PFI deals had been incorrectly left out of public debt figures and speculated when Gordon Brown knew about this.**

His office of national statistics had been aware of the mistake since 2001, since when the chancellor and his former chief secretary, Paul Boateng, had consistently given the impression that these deals *did* count towards the national debt figures that are so crucial to Gordon's cherished economic "golden rules".

The *Eye* has now been told by the treasury that it would be impossible to find out when ministers first knew about the mistake as these deals have never counted towards public debt, as technical documents going back to 1993 demonstrate. So if, as the treasury suggests, officials knew this, why did they misrepresent the picture – so much so that even experts at the respected Institute for Fiscal Studies, in an influential report on government finances last August, assumed that the 43 percent of PFI deals that were "on balance sheet" naturally added to the level of public debt?

Nobody knows for sure; but the misunderstanding encouraged by Brown and Boateng certainly helped keep critics at bay as the treasury pushed through a massive increase in PFI deals in the last couple of years, notably several "flagship" hospitals now described by a senior health department official as "awfully grand PFI schemes that are starting to give us real problems".

ANOTHER well-used accounting trick for PFI projects is to ensure that deals are treated as off-balance sheet for both the public authority paying for them and the private company that owns them. The public sector hides its liabilities while the private company gets tax relief on the full cost of the project.

Last year the government's financial reporting advisory board (FRAB) had reported to parliament's public accounts committee (PAC) that of 25 health and local authority schemes looked at, 20 enjoyed this "off-off" treatment when they should have been on one balance sheet and off the other (see *Eye* 1133).

FRAB explained that "initial investigation… suggested that the public sector inconsistencies stem from a belief that the assets must be treated as off-balance sheet by the public sector if the project is to proceed". In other words, billions of pounds of PFI liabilities were wrongly left off the public sector books.

Such false accounting by a company would normally prompt investigation and re-stated figures, so nearly a year after FRAB's findings, has the government corrected its own accounts? A treasury spokesman told the *Eye* that: "we are not aware of any signed deals which have changed balance sheet treatment." Billions of pounds worth of PFI debt will thus continue to be conveniently overlooked, while the PAC remains strangely silent on yet another hole in the public accounts.

SPANK YOU FOR YOUR CUSTOM
PLEASE CALL AGAIN SOON

Pub receipt

NEW depths were plumbed by former Cheadle Tory MP Stephen Day, who in his desperation to win back the seat he has lost twice before, launched a particularly low campaign against Lib Dem candidate Mark Hunter.

Within days of being selected following the death of sitting Lib Dem Patsy Calton, Hunter was a target for the first negative leaflet from Day. It claimed that local Lib Dems were "furious" that a "non local" – Mark Hunter – had been parachuted in from outside. Members of the Lib Dem selection committee have told the *Eye* this claim "is simply untrue".

The next round of leaflets from the Day camp carried the headline "Stephen Day, Living Here" and claimed that Mark Hunter lived outside the area. In fact he lives just three miles outside the constituency.

But it was one of the final by-election leaflets that really stank. Under a local press cutting showing the headline "Police warning after rape", someone in Tory command helpfully inserted "Shocking crime record of Mark Hunter". To the inexperienced eye, this was either very clumsy or could even have suggested Hunter was involved in the crime in some way. M'learned friends are being consulted.

A GROUP of mildly dissenting Labour MPs who think it might be a good idea to debate "contentious issues" before they become bad legislation, has garnered the support of around 50 backbench MPs.

Operating under the innocuous title of the "Open Dialogue" group, the MPs recently rolled up for a meeting in Portcullis House only to discover that their meeting room had been locked. As they decamped to cramped offices elsewhere, it was discovered that the original room had been commandeered by the new chair of the parliamentary Labour party and chief Gauletier, Ann Clwyd – who had got wind of the planned meeting and was determined to throw a spanner in its works.

ORDINARY taxpayers will be surprised to learn that the treasury actually encourages state companies to dodge tax payments.

Gordon Brown's department and the Scottish Executive have both given the go-ahead to the state-owned Scottish west coast ferry operator Caledonian MacBrayne, CalMac, to go offshore to avoid paying its 650 staff national insurance contributions.

It is estimated that Calmac would save about £1.5m a year by registering its workers somewhere else in the world. Yet only recently paymaster-general Dawn Primarolo seemed to be ruling out that option by suggesting that state bodies "should not seek to minimise their tax liabilities".

But in an apparent U-turn, just two weeks after Primarolo's comments, the treasury now says CalMac is entitled "to follow the same rules for managing tax liabilities as private companies". Could the about-face be linked to the fact that the government wants to put the ferry-service, a lifeline to Scottish island communities and which last year received £28m in grants, out to competitive tender?

WITH nuclear power looking increasingly like the only way the government can meet its climate change targets, and former cabinet secretary Sir Andrew Turnbull lined up to look at the prospect for No 10, the government's enthusiasm to privatise as much of the industry as possible shows no signs of abating.

Having broken up the state-owned British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) into bite-size chunks, the department of trade is reported to have brought in Rothschild's, a privatisation specialist from the Thatcher years, to advise it on flogging the decommissioning arm British Nuclear Group (BNG).

The official reason for the sale is to enable the company to compete for nuclear clean-up work at all the old sites when the market is opened up in 2008; but the effect will be to put a profitable business with no liabilities in private hands while the risky business of owning the old sites will stay firmly with taxpayers.

HOME office minister Hazel Blears has announced a new offence of "indirect incitement" which will supposedly help prosecute in "circumstances where people seek to glorify terrorist activity, for example saying 'isn't this a marvellous thing?' and 'these people are martyrs'... an endorsement of terrorism'."

Unless Blears only has it in for Muslims, the move could spell trouble for both Republican and loyalist websites, some of which celebrate assorted shootings, bombings and bank robberies, as well as the martyrs responsible for them.

Despite predictions that the Northern Bank raid and the murder of Robert McCartney would lead to a change of heart, Americans have declared donations to Sinn Fein well into six figures for the first half of this year. Undeclared collections, and money for the alleged dissidents, may well exceed the official total several times over. So presumably Blears will soon be talking to the Bush administration to seek extradition of those Americans responsible for some of the worst incitements to violence on the web, especially expressions of enthusiastic support for Continuity IRA and both factions of the Real IRA (neither of which is planning to even pretend to disband) from the Boston, Chicago and New York areas. Unless of course the legislation is only aimed at Muslims...

"How did this get out?"

MICHAEL HESELTINE is putting his experience of business and government to good use leading a campaign against the office of fair tra ding's (OFT) proposal to tear up newspaper and magazine distribution agreements that it reckons breach competition law. As explained in *Eye* 1135, the OFT move threatens up to 20,000 independent newsagents.

Not only is Tarzan concerned about his Haymarket publishing group, he is also deeply troubled by the impact such closures would have on rural communities. The last time community services were threatened in this way was 10 years ago when the then trade secretary tried to privatise the post office, only to be defeated by an unlikely alliance of the communication workers union and several Tory backwoodsmen fearing wholesale post office closures in their rural constituencies.

The free-market enthusiast at the DTI with little concern for rural communities back then? One Michael Heseltine...

The first non-stop Atlantic flight was made in 1919 by two Britons, John Alcock and Arthur Whitten Brown. They took 16hrs 22mins to get from Newfoundland to County Galway, with only a compass and sexton to guide them.

The Week

THERE was a star-studded gathering at Islington town hall last month in honour of Chris Smith, who has retired as MP for Islington South.

More than 250 guests heard speeches from, among others, Lord Melvyn Bragg, Paul Gambaccini, Sir Ian McKellen and Polly Toynbee of the *Grauniad*. But the event was soured somewhat by the presence of Smith's pushy replacement as MP, Emily Thornberry, who was overheard muttering that her majority of 484 was larger than Smith's first majority in 1983 of 363.

Meanwhile, Thornberry has been telling friends what a good friend she is "with Gordon". If so, she joins a long queue, and can expect to wait some time before probably ending up with nothing.

JOHN HEMMING, the new Lib Dem MP who recently impregnated one of his many mistresses, has tabled a parliamentary question.

Hemming wants "to ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer how many mothers in each age cohort from 12 to 19 have given birth in each year since 2000-01."

As a colleague responded: "Surely there are better ways of finding out if the CSA is after you?"

EYE TOLD YOU SO

THE audit commission has ordered an independent review into IT contracts at Birmingham's Royal Orthopaedic Hospital after concluding that chief executive Christine Miles made "a serious error of judgement" awarding £85,000 worth of IT work to her husband's firm (*Eye* 1131).

A report published this month found that Miles and chairman Les Lawrence made the decision to appoint her husband's company, Talquin, before CVs for other companies had been received and without the approval of the trust board. This breached NHS standards of business conduct.

Miles has always claimed she was not involved in the hiring process and blamed pressures on time for not putting the jobs out for tender; but the report concludes that Miles suggested Talquin and eliminated another possible supplier before declaring her interests.

NHS procurement guidelines allow business contracts to go to relatives only if they are won through competitive tendering.

2012 COUNTDOWN

"THE British 10k Run will allow thousands of runners, spectators and supporters to show their support for London 2012 in the crucial last days of our campaign," Lord Coe told entrants to the road race through the capital earlier this month, claiming that the event would "showcase London's ability to stage major sporting events".

Oh dear. Hundreds of the athletes who took part have described the race as a shambles. All had paid the comparatively steep £30 entry fee to race organiser Union Jack Sports Ltd. Who they? Unlike many other races around the country, which are organised by charities or local athletics associations, the British 10k is the work of a small company with an address in Mayfair and just one director, Michael O'Reilly.

Almost 200 members of the Runners' World internet forum have written race reports complaining how badly organised the day was. Dozens more have written about their experiences at www.british10kcomplaints.org. Angry letters have been sent to trading standards officers, to the mayor's office and to national sporting bodies.

As one runner put it: "Fantastic scenery. Dismal race. Shoddy organisation. Shambolic start. Chaotic finish. Vastly overpriced... Someone's making a big pot of cash at runners' expenses!"

Ann Widdecombe To The Rescue (BBC2)
Nigella (ITV)

GOT a problem? Call a celebrity. Alan Titchmarsh to do your accounts, maybe, or Keanu Reeves to unblock your sink. And while we're about it, Ann Widdecombe to sort out all your personal problems. What can there be in the realm of family relationships she doesn't know about, other than, well, almost everything?

What a tremendous jape it must have seemed to send this clenched, humourless woman around the country with a film crew and an unshakeable set of opinions. With silly cartoon credits and bursts of martial music in the background, the programme's sniggering tone is set from the start. You could almost forget that the people she sees are real, with real problems.

Last week 12-year-old Shannon was playing up at school and arguing with her dad Barry. Widdy, as no one calls her, soon spotted that Barry was the problem, and that he needed to change his attitude. Result: grand reconciliation. Barry said some kind words for the first time in ages and Shannon blubbed with relief. "There's no need to cry," said Barry: the precise opposite of the truth, as it happened, as Shannon's mother had died three years before and you could see that she had never truly grieved.

Anyone else but Widdy might have pointed this out; but you feel that outbursts of emotion wouldn't have been tolerated in family Widdy either. At such moments you almost feel sorry for her. She is doing her best, but in a job she is manifestly unsuited for. It's like watching Bonnie Langford play rugby league.

What's interesting, though, is that behind this unappealing exterior there does seem to be a kind and thoughtful person struggling to get out. When Widdy is by herself (ie accompanied only by a camera and production team), she comes out with all the usual frightened right-wing opinions about everything, but when she is listening to people (a skill you sense she has had to work on) she is much less judgemental. Indeed, most of her solutions to people's problems are surprisingly liberal and sympathetic. Sometimes you can see it in her eyes, the internal battle between the forces of light and darkness. Or maybe it's just indigestion. Nonetheless, the big question remains: would this series have been made if anyone other than Ann Widdecombe had been

doing it? Of course not, unless Ian Paisley were free. It seems extraordinary that such a trivial, deceitful little programme should be the centrepiece of Wednesday evenings on BBC2.

Nigella Lawson is a different sort of celebrity: slightly mysterious, unashamedly posh and almost invariably peckish. In this column we habitually decry television executives for their lack of originality and their aversion to risk, but Nigella's new daytime show is truly courageous programming, not to say groundbreaking. A chat show whose host can't really do small talk and snaps irritably at her guests is certainly different; add random bursts of cookery and the contributions of floating semi-guests like Jan Ravens or Maria McErlane, and you create a very strange concoction indeed. As ever, Nigella flirts coquettishly with the camera, the audience, her guests, cooking implements and oven, in between smiling desperately at everything. But her fundamental problem is a terrible lack of charm: she simply doesn't have the lightness of touch required to host a fluffy soufflé of a show like this. Her brittle manner, not to say her haut-bourgeois guests, seem weirdly

out of place, and she can't help looking at the audience from time to time, clearly wondering who all these awful people are.

Why did she do it? Intense ambition is the only possible answer. Why did ITV hire her? Because she's a celebrity, of course. Although if she keeps on making programmes as bad as this, she won't be for much longer.

'Couch Potato'

BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2004-2005

MOST company annual reports are written for a target audience of a small number of major shareholders and the commentators on the financial pages. But the BBC version is a strange, mad beast: the shareholders (aka licence-payers and viewers) number around 50 million; and such is the media interest that any moment of candour in the report may make the front-pages.

A further complication is that the report is written by a board of governors which can have quite different aims and priorities from the board of management which actually puts out the products. Furthermore, the most important audience for the report is not the public or the press but the government. The result is that the document becomes a mass of contradictions. It's rather like reading an annual report from a clothing firm which keeps saying that the garments are great but suggesting that it might be a better on the whole if it sold sandwiches instead.

For example, because the governors are on a riff about "distinctive programming", they at one point single out for praise the Kenneth Tynan drama In Praise of Hardcore on BBC4. As it happens, no critic liked this and no viewer watched it; but that doesn't matter: the crucial thing is that no other channel would have done it.

In the same way, The Culture Show on BBC2 is highlighted, not for getting viewers or scoops but because it fulfilled a previous pledge by the board to increase arts programming. If the BBC governors ran a restaurant and someone died from salmonella after eating an omelette, the annual report would note only: "The addition of more egg-based dishes to the menu fulfilled targets to increase hen productivity."

This constant preference for theory over practice is shown in the most worrying aspect of the report: the consistent application by the governors of old-fashioned Reithian assumptions to a modern broadcasting culture. For example, it is noted with pleasure that 6 Music – a digital station set up for college-grad rock nostalgics in their 30s and 40s – "is committed to more than 550 hours of rebroadcast and newly commissioned documentaries and essays".

Similarly, 1 Extra, the black and urban music station, is chided that "more must be done to improve the quality of its speech programming". And the board also frets about how to sort out the 30-minute news bulletin which begins the evening on BBC3 but which no one is watching.

All of these worries, though, are based on a theory of mixed-genre programming with which the BBC began. But, with a single television service or even a couple and just a pair of radio channels, it was reasonable to think about whether the viewers or listeners were getting a balanced diet of speech and music, entertainment and information. In a multi-channel environment, however, consumers move around between services, constructing their own schedules.

The governors think their job is to ensure that 1 Extra listeners get some speech or 6 Music listeners get a shot of documentary: like mothers saying that there'll be no pudding until you've eaten your greens. Yet much of the audience, when those nanny-imposed programmes come on, will just switch over to a network that provides what they want. The news on BBC3 gets no audience not because it's terrible but because no one goes to that channel to find out what's happened. Until the governors and the government understand how a modern broadcast audience works, the corporation is being asked to obey contradictory instructions: to give the public what it wants but also to provide what old-fashioned people think the public ought to want.

To be fair, the governors have to say this stuff because the government wants them to rather than because they necessarily believe it. Revealingly, chairman Grade backed away at the press conference launching the report from one of its most provocative complaints: that BBC comedy is too often set among "the white middle-classes". This ridiculous generalisation – which implies that My Family, My Hero and The Office should be separated not by the quality of their jokes but by poring over their characters' CVs – had Grade squirming under press interrogation. Of course, he purred, such stuff could be very funny but there was just a risk of having too much of it. It was obvious he knew he was talking bollocks; but then this ludicrous theory of humour was only included because Tessa Jowell and "new" Labour are obsessed with the BBC delivering "distinctiveness" and "accessibility".

For this reason, a sense of intelligent people saying not what they feel but what they need to say runs through the report. The director-general notes that all the BBC's best programmes come "from the heart" (a simple, direct passion) but then lavishes praise on Jonathan Ross whose success comes, if anything, from the tongue in his cheek.

The government, though, can't be blamed for the document's biggest mistake: the decision of the board to take massive bonuses despite the example of DG Thommo in refusing his. One huge beneficiary was the director of public and corporate affairs, whose job should surely have included understanding and informing colleagues that managers taking fat-cat bonuses at a time when thousands are being sacked is a public relations disaster.

'Remote Controller'

MEDIA NEWS

DAVID MANNION, editor-in-chief of ITV News, was quick to sing his staff's praises over their coverage of the London terrorist attacks.

"We got what we think are the first live pictures on TV of the Tavistock Square bombing," he told the *Guardian*. "We had a live link up and running within 20 minutes of the story breaking… ITV was exceptional in recognising the magnitude of the story… we fulfilled our public service remit and provided comprehensive coverage."

However, he failed to explain why a full two hours after police had announced that they wanted Londoners who had been trapped at work to start making their way home, the ITV News Channel was still running a scrolling banner across the bottom of the screen which read: "Official police advice to Londoners: remain where you are, do not travel."

BBC staff were touched to receive a herogram from director-general Mark Thompson on 8 July, "at the end of quite a week for the BBC", congratulating those responsible for reporting the London bombing.

"There were so many highlights," he gushed, "it seems unfair to pick any out, but Five Live, News 24 and London 94.9 did a stunning job…" Yes, 24-hour news channels actually covered a news story – amazing!

"So many of our broadcasters and journalists delivered brilliant performances – Matthew Bannister, Mark Easton, Mark Urban and Frank Gardner are just a few of the names I clocked as I watched and listened to the output, though there were many more." Oh, and it was a record-breaking day for the BBC News website as well: "We comfortably topped the 50 million page views we got for the election and with the highest ever demand for bandwidth."

And so he raved on about the BBC's triumph. True, some of this might be considered in slightly dubious taste given the sensitive subject matter but who is worrying when there are "highlights" and "brilliant performances" to be savoured? Treble Baftas all round!

A BREATHLESS announcement from a Sky News reporter at 11.20 on the morning of 7 July that he had seen troops in Covent Garden and Charing Cross sent shockwaves through the rolling news channels, which all relayed the news that the army had been deployed to maintain security in the capital following the terrorist bombs.

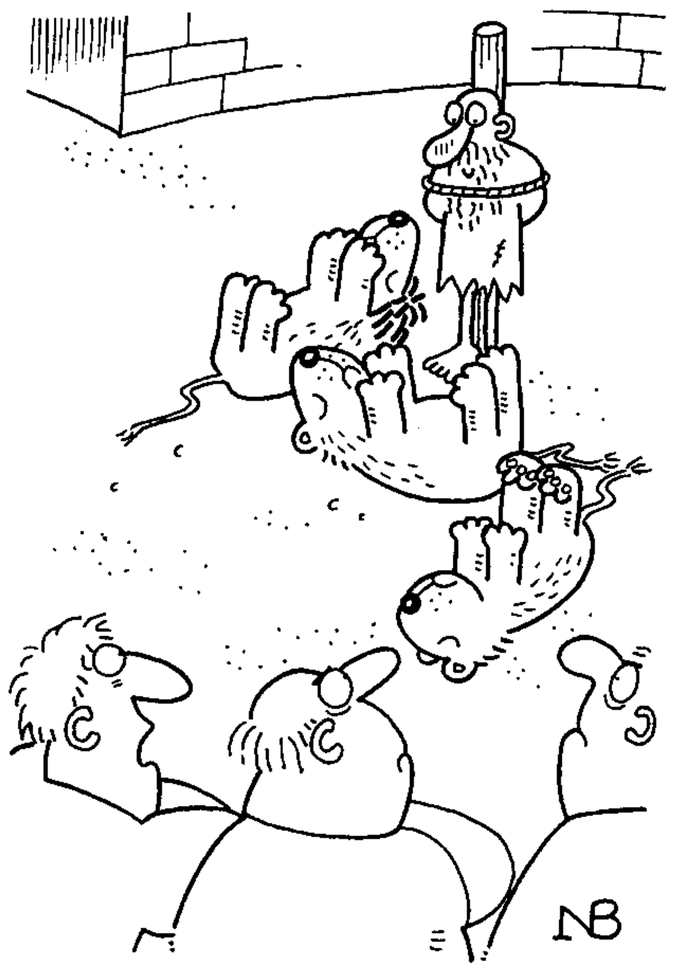
It was only when the police categorically denied that they had requested help from the army that anyone realised the uniforms the hack had spotted were actually those of veterans and "uniformed historic interpreters" on their way to the VE Day commemorations that were being held that day in St James' Park.

DAME Pauline Neville-Jones appeared on BBC2's *Newsnight* to offer the nation her view that good communications would have been essential for the four mass murderers as they planned and executed their attacks on London.

Dame Pauline is something of an expert in this field – and not just because of her chairmanship of the joint intelligence committee. Back in 1996 she worked at NatWest Markets, where she provided another mass murderer, Slobodan Milosevic, with the best communications available thanks to a telecommunications privatisation deal.

THE board of governors says it wants to have fewer repeats on BBC One in peak-time. But the question on the lips of union leaders is who is going to be around to make these new programmes after Mark Thompson's redundancy crusade begins.

But they are missing the point. The redundancies will release BBC money for new programmes… and they will all be made by independents.



"I told you it was a mistake to put Woodward in charge of the lions"

GOING LIVE

WHEN BBC News 24 went live to Mark Simpson for the latest on the police investigation into the terrorist attacks (sorry, "bombings") in London, the anchor asked him: "Mark, what do you know about the activity going on behind that plastic sheeting?"

"Well, not an awful lot at the moment to be honest," revealed the hack.

Number crunching

6.6 million
■ Average UK TV audience for 'greatest spectacular ever seen', Live 8

6.2 million
■ TV audience for *EastEnders* which was considered so disastrous the BBC overhauled the series

5.5 billion
■ Potential global TV audience for Live 8, according to organisers

4.8 billion
■ Total population of world with access to electricity

DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC2

Anne Robinson: What sweet substance made by insects is eaten with yoghurt in Greece?

Contestant: Greece.

AR: What word means the opposite of dystopia and was also the title of a book by Thomas More?

Contestant: Myopia.

AR: "It's what your right arm's for" was a slogan advertising what type of product: beer or toilet paper?

Contestant: Er, toilet paper.

ACCORDING to the Beeb's editorial guidelines, "Impartiality lies at the heart of the BBC's commitment to its audiences". But not when it comes to reporting Britain's Olympic bid, it seems.

A News 24 voiceover from Singapore revealed that the British presentation was "inspiring" and amounted "almost to perfection". Furthermore, the whole team was "magnificent", "not least the prime minister who was a real star here".

One of the five BBC correspondents at the celebratory junket, Hazel Irvine, interrupted an interview with one of the bidders to toast her with champagne. Over on *Newsnight*, meanwhile, Gavin Esler gave culture secretary Tessa Jowell the last word in an interview. Tessa used it to plug both Cherie and Tony: "That's the kind of prime minister we've got and we're very lucky."

OUT OF CON-TEXT

JUDGING by its press ads, Steven Knight's *The President of an Empty Room* at the National Theatre has received rave reviews.

The *Guardian* apparently enjoyed its "lashings of atmosphere"; the *Evening Standard* praised the "voodoo mystique and magic in Howard Davies' highly atmospheric production"; and the *Daily Telegraph* called it "beautifully authentic".

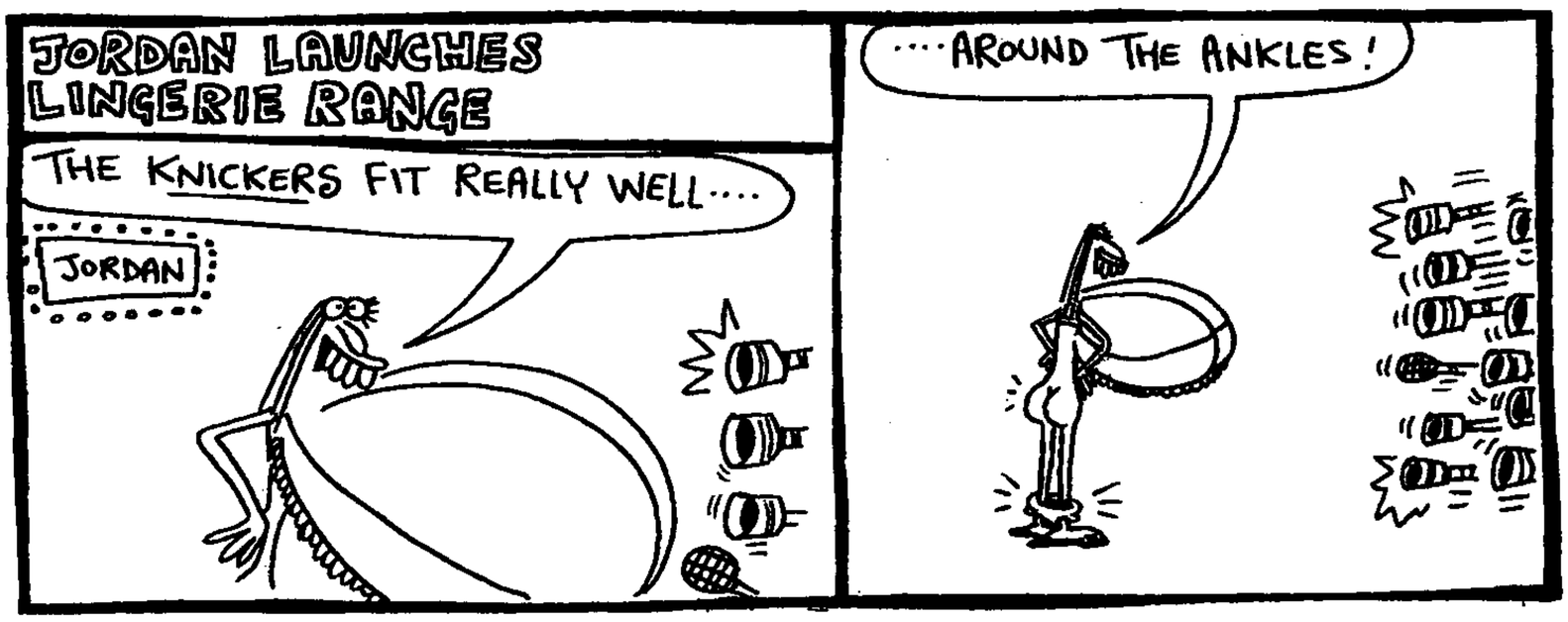
Michael Billington's full sentence in the *Guardian* ran as follows: "The play feels like an outsider's report rather than an insider's vision, and in an attempt to overcompensate, Knight gives us reams of plot and lashings of atmosphere."

The *Standard*'s Nicholas de Jongh opined that "a little voodoo mystique and magic in Howard Davies's highly atmospheric, traverse-stage production… cannot fortify a play reliant on undramatic forms of philosophic speculation."

And what the *Telegraph*'s Charles Spencer actually said was: "Bunny Christie has contributed a beautifully authentic design, and the actors bust a gut trying to flesh out their sketchy and in some cases non-existent characters" – but neither of these could make up for the "duff script" with "almost nothing to say".

SUPERMODELS

KERBER



DOING THE ROUNDS

Whodunnit?

ON 26 May Dr Dinah Parums, formerly a consultant histopathologist at the West Dorset General Hospitals NHS trust, was cleared of serious professional misconduct by the General Medical Council (GMC).

The fitness to practise panel could find no evidence that she had deliberately introduced a block of breast tissue from one patient known to have cancer (Mrs A) into the tissue specimens of another patient (Mrs W). However, there was no dispute that the substitution *had* taken place and that it was "highly unlikely" to have been an accident. So who did it?

Dr Parums was appointed in October 2001 when there was one full time consultant and one associate specialist dealing with 10,000 diagnostic surgical pathology cases per year. The associate specialist, who had no membership qualifications, had been given consultant responsibility for reporting cervical cytology and histology. Dr Parums immediately raised this with the trust management, as well as concerns about the lack of audit, understaffing, poor equipping of the lab, the use of NHS facilities and secretarial staff to support non-NHS forensic work and the lack of laboratory accreditation and adherence to cancer guidelines.

She was branded a whistleblower; but reviews of the department, both internal and by the Royal College of Pathologists, failed to sort out the problems. Dr Parums also claimed she was harassed by fellow consultant colleague, Dr Khalid Jaber. When Dr Jaber was asked at the GMC hearing if there was "a major dispute and a major degree of friction" between the two of them he said: "True, started by Dr Parums." An investigation into this deeply dysfunctional working relationship undertaken by Dr David Cove, then associate medical director, appears to have made no difference.

In February 2002 a patient (Mrs W) presented with an abnormal mammogram and an atypical breast biopsy. She then underwent a lumpectomy which Dr Parums reported in March 2002. She made a genuine diagnostic error and "over-called it". Instead of being brought to her attention as part of a review of all the patient's diagnostic material at a multidisciplinary team meeting, as per the cancer guidelines, Mrs W went straight for a mastectomy.

Histopathology analysis is seldom black and white, and even the best pathologists make mistakes – especially when working in such a pressured environment. However, Dr Parums was quick to acknowledge her error as soon as it was brought to her attention; and on 7 June 2002 she wrote to the surgeon, Mr Mike Graham, with a copy to Dr Jaber, admitting "I have over-called the case" in analysing the original breast lump. However, subsequent analysis of tissues blocks from the mastectomy did find evidence of cancer.

In January 2003 Dr Parums was suspended by the trust as part of a costly internal investigation, alleging that she had deliberately inserted cancerous tissue from another patient into Mrs W's mastectomy samples. She was subsequently reported to the GMC by Dr Cove, now medical director, but the trust repeatedly refused to hand over information or documentation that might have allowed her to establish her innocence.

It took two and a half years of hell, and a GMC investigation, to show that in July 2002, while Dr Parums was away on leave, Dr Jaber de-waxed and de-identified Mrs W's tissue blocks, prepared new tissue slides from these and covertly sent them to other histopathologists to support his accusations against her. Dr Jaber has now been reported to the GMC.

Having already admitted her mistake, Dr Parums didn't have a motive for covering it up. And no credible pathologist would covertly switch specimens knowing that it could be so easily discovered by DNA analysis. Dr Parums' life and career have been needlessly destroyed in the last two and a half years. Meanwhile, Mrs W is none the wiser as to her diagnosis as her mastectomy specimen is no longer intact for further analysis.

M.D.

off your trolley

REEVE & WAY

THE HUMAN BODY IS LIKE A MACHINE...
CLINIC 5
AS IT GETS OLDER THINGS WEAR OUT AND JUST STOP WORKING
COMPLETE BLOODY OPPOSITE TO A NEW HOSPITAL
NOT IN USE
FILE CRASHED ALERT

SIGNAL FAILURES

That's progress

OFFICIALS could hardly contain their delight when they published new rail statistics last month, showing London commuter trains had recovered their punctuality before the Hatfield derailment in 2000 sent Railtrack's network into meltdown. "Passengers can take heart from another set of good performance and reliability figures," gushed David Quarmby, chairman of the "strategic" rail authority.

How times change. Before Hatfield, train operators were serially censured for poor punctuality. In August 1998, for instance, franchising director John O'Brien released new stats and said: "These results continue to paint a very unsatisfactory picture of performance as a whole." For most London commuter franchises those unsatisfactory results, measured as an average over the year, were *better* than the latest figures.

Some train operators have inched their way back to pre-Hatfield punctuality by improving operating and engineering discipline (ie rediscovering how British Rail ran the trains). Others have moved goalposts to improve their figures. Stagecoach's South West Trains showed the biggest improvement in the new punctuality stats, partly because it started from the position of being one of Britain's worst franchises. In December it inserted extra minutes into schedules. A train reaching Waterloo an hour after leaving Windsor was previously eight minutes late and recorded as delayed; if the same train takes an hour today, it's only four minutes late and officially recorded as "on time". Journeys for most passengers are little different (some are much slower), but what matters are the stats, not the passengers, as Stagecoach tries to grab new franchises and retain SWT.

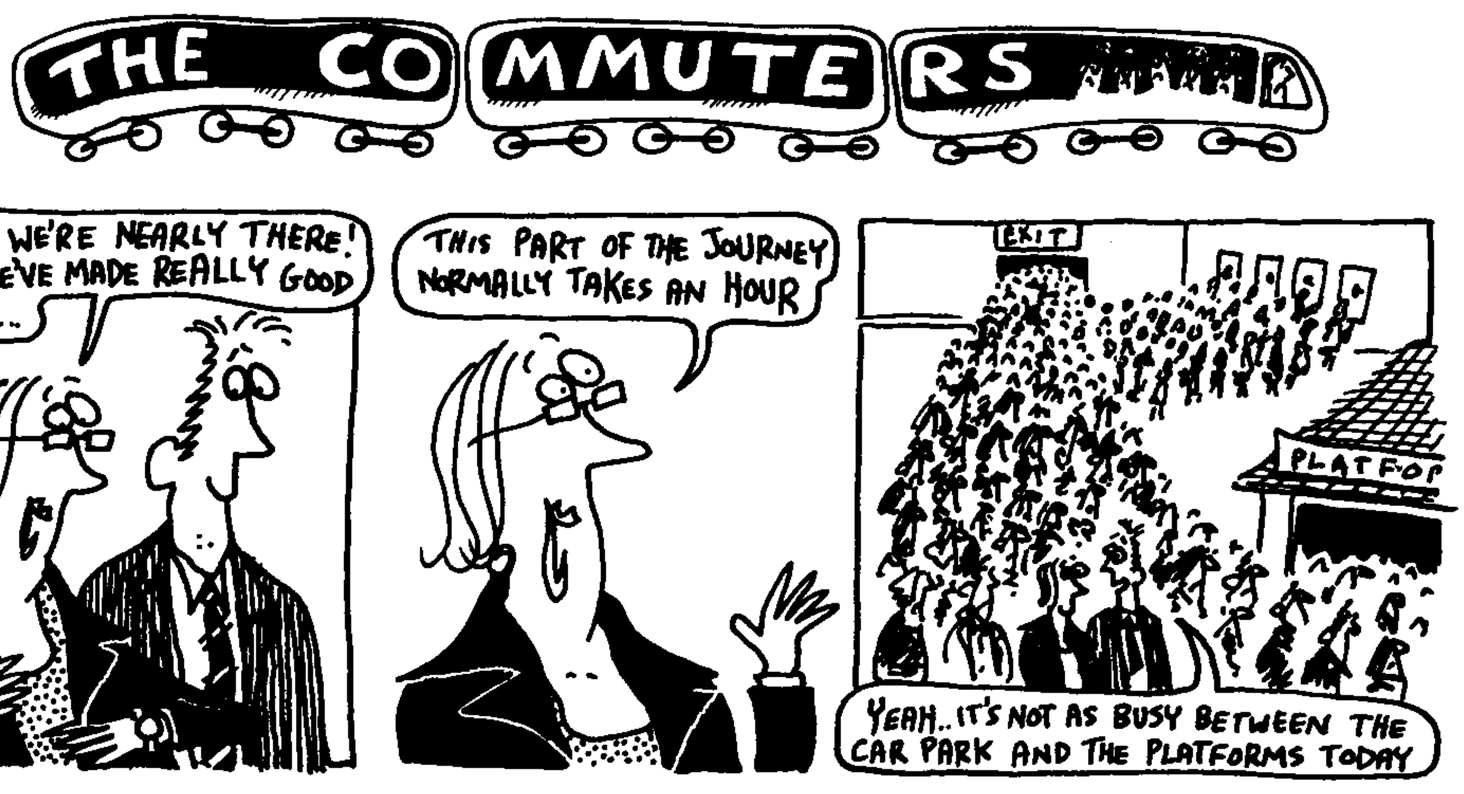
Having noted the plaudits for SWT's timetable adjustments, other train companies and Network Rail will be tempted to follow the same easy route to better statistics, and train journeys all over Britain could become even slower. In the continuing absence of a transport policy, "new" Labour doesn't know if Britain needs faster train services or not. Billions of pounds have been spent on track improvement to allow quicker journeys on both Virgin Trains franchises, and more public cash is used to lease tilting trains that go faster round curves. But the higher speeds are partly negated by extra minutes inserted to stop Virgin's punctuality stats looking even worse.

Virgin's Wolverhampton-Euston trains are allowed nearly 20 minutes for the 11 miles from Coventry to Rugby – roughly a 35mph average speed for 140mph tilting trains. They often stop around Rugby to let delayed trains past, and still continue on time or early. Punctuality is measured at each train's destination, so Virgin's 2.49pm from Wolverhampton is allowed 22 minutes for the 13 miles to Birmingham, where it terminates. The next non-stop train after the 2.49 is the 3.02 Arriva service, which also terminates at Brum but is allocated 16 minutes; apparently Virgin's modern 125mph trains, which have big engines for rapid acceleration, need 38 percent more time than Arriva's 90mph ex-BR trains.

ANOTHER SWT tactic to improve figures is dumping trains which managers reckon are unreliable. Many train operators have to struggle with unreliable trains decades old, because new trains would cost more to lease; but SWT has new trains to replace nearly-new trains which are less reliable than it would have liked. That £90m fleet of five-year-old trains was built to SWT's orders; but SWT is allowed to discard them already, after its subsidy leapt by more than 300 percent (*Eyes passim*).

The displaced trains will end up as another franchise's problem or, if abandoned altogether, will mean future new trains are costlier because of the risk of them being dumped too.

'Dr B Ching'


THE COMMUTERS
LOOK! WE'RE NEARLY THERE! AND WE'VE MADE REALLY GOOD TIME...
THIS PART OF THE JOURNEY NORMALLY TAKES AN HOUR
EXIT
PLATFOR
YEAH.. IT'S NOT AS BUSY BETWEEN THE CAR PARK AND THE PLATFORMS TODAY

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

SERVICE WITH A SNARL

ROSSENDALES, debt collectors for 117 local authorities, describe themselves as providing "a doorstep service that is second-to-none". Not all those on the receiving end would agree.

Lyndsay White arrived home in Nottingham on 30 April to find a bailiff on her doorstep. Despite the fact Lyndsay was nine months pregnant and already in negotiation with the city council over how she could pay £600 in council tax arrears, the bailiff told the distressed woman he was going to come back and take away her furniture.

The bailiff then got into a loud altercation with Lyndsay's father, Trevor Fairminer, who had objected to the way his daughter was being treated. The following day Lyndsay could no longer feel her baby's heartbeat. She was admitted to hospital, where her son Alfie was stillborn at full-term. Mr Fairminer is convinced, although he has no proof, that the stress caused by Rossendales' visit was responsible for Alfie's death. No post-mortem examination was held and doctors have not been able to explain why an apparently healthy baby should just die in the womb.

There were further examples of Rossendales' "second-to-none" service after Alfie's death. An internal email was mistakenly attached to a letter to Mr Fairminer, in which he was described as a "nutcase" by Rossendales employee Melanie Siddle. The company concedes that Lyndsay should never have received a visit from a bailiff because her offer to pay in instalments was indeed under consideration. Rossendales says that the bailiff recognised that she was pregnant but did not stop to take instruction on how to deal with her, and is being retrained as a result.

Nevertheless Jon Collins, Labour leader of Nottingham city council, has told Mr Fairminer the council is satisfied that "Rossendales behaved in an appropriate way".

HULL OF A FAMILY

BACK in March jurors at Hull crown court heard a harrowing tale of abuse at Bede's View, a Hull city council-run care home for mentally-handicapped adults. Care worker Edward Hewitt, 28, had rubbed Michael Bell's face in his own urine "like a puppy" after he wet himself, screamed at him and left him crying on the floor.

Hewitt's sister, Jackie, 29, nipped and pulled the hair of 37-year-old Josephine Barnett. The Hewitts, who were among seven workers found guilty of various charges of ill-treatment and neglect, were each jailed for 12 months after the judge, Roger Thorn QC, branded them the "ringleaders" of what he called "persistent and endemic abuse by carers who appeared to know no shame".

Can Hull city council prevent repetition of such abuse in the future? It does have a grandly-titled "Health and Social Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Commission" whose brief is to oversee "the provision, planning and management of social and healthcare, children's, elderly persons and mental welfare services". Two of the commission's eight members are Labour councillors John and Betty Hewitt – who happen to be the parents of abusers Edward and Jackie Hewitt. Jackie was living with her parents while the abuse went on.

Four months on, the Hewitt parents have not resigned from the scrutiny commission, they have not expressed any opinion on whether their positions on it are still tenable, nor any regret over what happened at Bede's View. But at least not everyone on Hull city council is completely heartless. When Jackie Hewitt was suspended from her job and awaiting trial, her parents' fellow Longhill ward Labour councillor John Black, manager of the Hull Resettlement Project, a charity for the homeless, gave her a job!

Number crunchings

100 million

■ Extra litres of water per day which mayor Ken Livingstone wants Londoners to save by not flushing toilets

150 million

■ Litres per day that would have been produced by proposed desalination plant in east London, blocked by mayor

900 million

■ Litres per day Thames Water loses through leaks, missing Ofwat targets for third year running

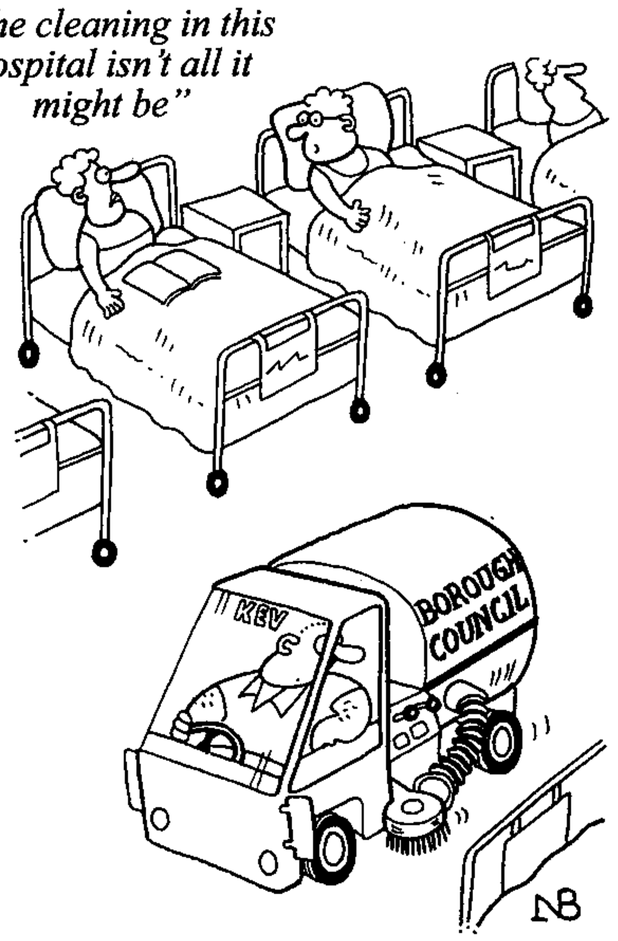
BOARD STIFF

"CONFIDENCE in local democracy" is the slogan of the Standards Board for England (SBE), set up in 2001 to police the behaviour of councillors. Alas, the SBE's erratic rulings are undermining not only confidence in local democracy but also any faith that the SBE is capable of delivering just decisions.

As *Eye* 1134 reported, the SBE last month decided to take no action against three Labour councillors in Rochdale who covered up a colleague's criminal conviction for violence. Robin Parker, Colin Lambert and Peter Roberts all knew that Gholam Murtaza had served a jail sentence for assaulting two female detectives with a kitchen knife (*Eyes* 1097 and 1100), and was therefore not qualified to stand as a councillor in the May 2003 local elections. Yet they let his selection go ahead and he was elected. One of the SBE's "ethical standards officers" concluded that no public interest would be served by pursuing the matter further.

Roberts has retired and Parker and Murtaza are no longer councillors, but there is nothing to stop them standing again; and Lambert still sits on the council's cabinet. SBE summaries of the four cases are now available and have been described by one person close to the matter as a "whitewash". The *Eye* contacted the three independent members of Rochdale council's standards committee, Barry Cropper, Geoff Kindon and Gerald Neary, who all resigned in disgust at the SBE's inaction. None of them was prepared to comment on the case because, they explained, under the local government act 2000 they could face two years in jail for doing so. Doesn't it send your "confidence in local government" soaring?

"The cleaning in this hospital isn't all it might be"



LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELDS

ONE WAY to avoid the unseemly fuss over whether schools should be allowed to build on their playing fields is for them to never ask for permission in the first place. That's what happened at Bramcote Hills Sport and Community College in Nottinghamshire, which started laying hard core for a car park on part of its sports pitch without even making a planning application.

The school, due to get two new sports pitches in four years' time thanks to the restoration of a nearby landfill site, planned to provide a car park for members of the public who use its facilities out of hours. But work was called off after nearby residents called the county council to complain that the lane to access the car park would be too narrow to deal with any extra traffic. The environment department ordered the school to stop all deliveries of surfacing materials immediately, since putting a new car park in the grounds clearly needed planning permission.

The name of that school again: Bramcote Hills *Sport* and Community College. Holder of a Sport England "Sportsmark" award and recent winners of a £76,000 lottery grant for sports equipment. If that's how *they* treat their sports pitches, what hope everywhere else?

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER

THE STUPID FOOL!
QUIN'S BEEN STOPPED AT HEATHROW WITH 20 KILOS OF TOP GRADE, UNCUT, THAI GRASS!
WHAT WAS HE THINKING!
IT'S A FAIR COP, GUV
THERE'S ENOUGH LEMONGRASS HERE TO SINK A THAI RESTAURANT
FALSE BOTTOM IN A SITAR CASE – FIENDISH!

LUVVIES

"Every few years, I feel the urge to mark myself and mark the passages, as if my body was a map and every scar will always be with me, and every scar tells you where I've been, like an animal."

ASIA ARGENTO, actress (on her tattoos), *Sunday Times Style magazine*

Submitted by Chris Bennett.

NOOKS and CORNERS

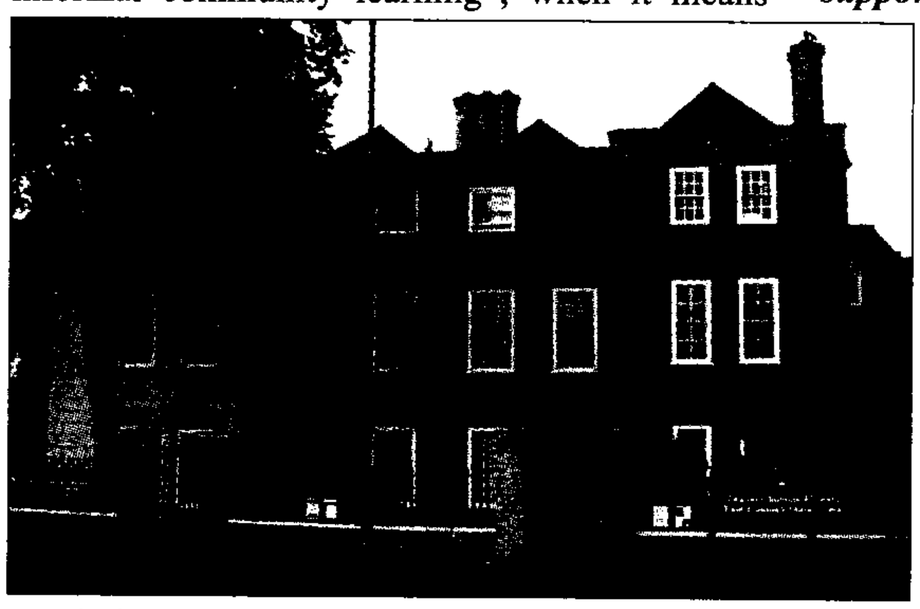
MORE on the National Trust, where lowly members of staff will not be the only victims of the cuts required by the disastrous move of its headquarters to Swindon (*Eye* 1135).

The opening and presentation of some properties will also be affected, and a first victim will be Sutton House in Hackney – one of the few historic buildings open to the public in this part of London and the only one owned by the trust.

Sutton House is a remarkable survivor: a Tudor mansion built in 1535 and altered in subsequent centuries. It has been owned by the trust since 1938, but was long neglected and closed, and even squatted, until a local campaign in the 1980s stopped a proposal to convert it into flats and made the trust do its duty. The house was then properly restored and opened in 1994.

For some years it was run as an historic house combined with an art gallery. It was used as an education centre and could be hired for evening events and weddings. But in the last few years these activities have been cut back and the local management committee has been disbanded.

Now there is a proposal to review the way Sutton House is run "in the light of the current national drive to reduce wage costs". But there seems no advantage in restructuring the management of all the trust's London properties, ostensibly to give more "focus on formal and informal community learning", when it means



restricting public opening at Sutton House to weekends only, closing the café and stopping all weddings and hiring. The reason for these changes, combined with more redundancies, is to save a mere £60,000 a year – less than a third of director-general Fiona Reynolds' salary (with her Swindon allowance), while the exciting new Swindon HQ costs some £20m.

Why pick on Sutton House for a piddling economy when it does good work and is a rare asset in one of the most deprived parts of London? I fear snobbery may be to blame. Not only is the London area manager responsible for these proposals a former army officer who dislikes the anomaly of Sutton House's community role, but it has never been favoured by those types who are only interested in grand aristocratic Georgian country houses. And lavender bags don't sell well on Homerton High Street.

The National Trust may now have a "new" Labour director-general (and Fiona Reynolds, to her credit, supported the Save Sutton House campaign in the 1980s before she worked for the trust), but old attitudes survive – if now repackaged in an expensive new office block in Swindon.

I really don't like knocking the trust, with its admirable and necessary aims pursued by a dedicated staff, but I wish it would do more to remain true to them and not be corrupted by the Thatcherite and Blairite self-serving managerial culture.

PS: The trust is advertising for an assistant director, strategy and foresight, and a head of foresight, at salaries which, with foresight, would easily cover the losses at Sutton House.

JOHN PRESCOTT has written a wonderfully pompous letter to the Daily Telegraph objecting to articles on the destructive arrogance of his "housing market renewal" – or Pathfinder Systematisation proposals for demolishing thousands of houses in the North (Eyes passim ad nauseam).

The facts were wrong, puffed the deputy prime minister, yet no correction was published. "For the record, the department does not support large-scale demolition" – that's good to know – and a mere 10,000 "unsustainable" homes are to be demolished by 2006. Prescott claims that 72 percent of the residents of the Welsh Streets area of Liverpool approve of the Pathfinder plan, yet the Welsh Streets Home Group has announced that there have been 230 declarations by residents against the planned demolition of 469 houses, which represents at least 50 percent, and more are coming in as residents learn what is going on.

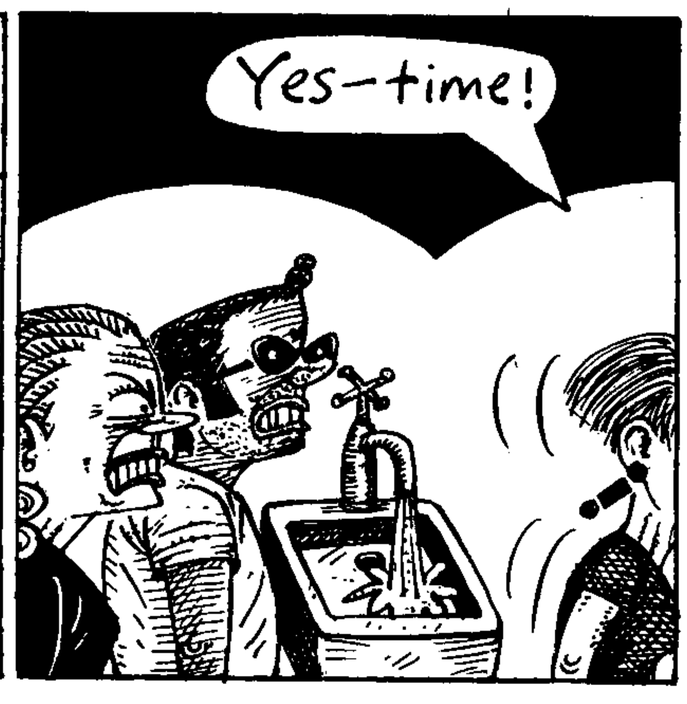
In his letter Prescott also denied that the plans for demolition were under review. Odd, then, that in the House of Lords, in response to a question from Lord Alton of Liverpool, Baroness Andrews, parliamentary under secretary at the OPDM, stated that: "English Heritage has recently produced a policy position statement on housing market renewal in which it recommended that Pathfinders should undertake an assessment of the historic environment to help to inform the regeneration of their areas. The Government agree with this" – which sounds like a review to me. Besides, with Prescott's ostensible commitment to local democracy, perhaps this planning juggernaut, given the huge opposition to it, ought to be reviewed.

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

A brilliant conceptual work, it also draws attention to the wasting of one of our most precious resources.
MARK McGOWAN
"RUNNING TAP"
HOUSE GALLERY
CAMBERWELL



I-SPY

New Orleans

Submitted by Hannah Quirk.

£10 paid for similar submissions.
(SAE required for return of photographs)

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

RECENT visitors to London's Wigmore Hall have been bemused to see, prominently framed and mounted on the foyer wall, an out-of-focus photograph of three young men having fun in ways not obviously related to the kind of fun on offer at the Wigmore.

They don't seem to be listening to Brahms. And indeed they don't look like the kind of young men who would want to. But they do happen, as the inscription says, to be the sons of the financier Donald Kahn who gave a lot of money toward the last refurbishment of the Hall and asked for this bizarre and tackily irrelevant gesture as his quid pro quo.

Ever since it appeared, the Hall has been feebly arguing that it was a small return for the million-or-so pounds that changed hands in the process. And you may agree. But at the same time there have been whispered assurances that the offending photo wouldn't be there for ever. And I strongly suspect its time is up: not least because it signals two things that the Hall, and Kahn, must both feel that it's better not to thrust in people's faces.

The first is the misguided management regime of the Hall's front man, Paul Kildea, which has suddenly come tumbling down. As previously reported in this column, Kildea has not been a success in his brief time in the job. He tried to turn the Hall into something it wasn't (namely, chic, trendy and expensive), alienating the faithful clientele, upsetting artists and using the place as a vehicle to promote his own modest talents as a conductor.

In the process he made serious enemies, including board members like the ubiquitous woman-about-London-music Jackie Rosenfeld, and the still influential former director of the Wigmore, William Lyne. So he had to go: hence the abrupt announcement of his "resignation". And as he packs his bags he'll probably be taking all reminders of his time in office with him.

But the other reason that photo will be coming down is the unfortunate affair of Alberto Vilar, the super-rich patron of music whose fall from grace will have left many other patrons thinking they might care to keep a lower profile. Vilar's gifts invariably came with the requirement that his name and face were plastered everywhere ("to enourage future givers" he always said), generating an absurd cult of self-importance. But when it turned out that he didn't have the money he was promising to all and sundry and was then, last month, arrested on fraud charges, the reprisals were swift and vicious. Everywhere his name is being gouged from Walls of Honour and erased from programme books.

Our own Royal Opera wasted no time in remodelling the Vilar Young Artists Programme as the Jette Parker Young Artists. And if, as rumoured, it turns out that Vilar never actually paid over the £10m he was said to have given the ROH to create the Vilar Floral Hall, we can expect a change of name there too before the year is out.

In the best traditions of pride presaging a fall, it's clearly not the time for wealthy patrons to be courting self-indulgent glory. If I were Donald Kahn, I'd make sure that photo leaves in Paul Kildea's luggage.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

"I think it's time it was put down"

In The Courts

WIGS were hurled in the air in delight when m'learned friends heard that the lord chancellor had sacked His Honour Judge Richard Seymour QC from the technology and construction court (TCC).

The TCC deals with technical cases which require the skills of specialist judges; and the eight members of the panel hold the rank of senior circuit judge. Seymour was notorious among members of Tecbar, an association of barristers who practise mainly in the TCC, for his irrational judgments, criticism of counsel and rude and intemperate comments.

Many had become so frustrated they were opting to take cases to the high court rather than risk facing Seymour. The low point came when the appeal court ordered a retrial of Co-operative Wholesale Society vs ICL, which Seymour heard in 2003. Their lordships' verdict was damning. They described Seymour's remarks as "wounding and sarcastic". He had accused witnesses of lying and favoured the computer giant ICL's evidence to the extent that "his objective vision was distorted". His judgment "made no commercial sense whatsoever".

After a raft of similar complaints the lord chancellor was compelled to act, and appointed Mr Justice Alan Moses to conduct an inquiry. The Moses report found that, er, well, no one actually knows what it found because it was kept secret. But it resulted in Seymour's removal from the TCC.

So, justice was done: Seymour was out on his ear, his career in tatters, to the resounding cheers of the barristers who had crossed swords with him and the surprise of those who thought judges were unsackable? Not quite. The lord chief justice has been pleased to announce that Seymour will now sit in the Queen's bench division, doing the work of a high court judge – in effect, a promotion.

HIGH PRINCIPALS

DONCASTER COLLEGE is bidding farewell to its principal and chief executive George Holmes *(Eyes passim)*, who is going to the University of Bolton as – and if you see him, he'll tell you – "the youngest vice-chancellor in Britain".

He leaves behind a college falling apart at the seams, having steered it to a crippling £1.6m deficit while himself living high on the hog with a steep salary and obscene perks.

The governors had nodded through Holmes's perks, including expensive cars and personalised number plates. But at Christmas the Learning and Skills Council had had enough and urged Holmes to start looking for alternative employment.

Readers might be forgiven for thinking that the DfES, to say nothing of the local Bolton MP, might have been aware of Holmes's "achievements" in Doncaster and would have sought to have some input into the process. Alas, Bolton West MP (and secretary of state for education) Ruth Kelly seems to have been caught on the hop.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

IN those dazzling weeks when Tony Blair was simultaneously saving Europe, Africa and the world (while snatching the Olympics from under the nose of French president Jacques Chirac), none of his initiatives seemed quite so dramatic as the way he took on Chirac over the EU budget.

To divert attention from France's failure to deliver on the EU constitution, Frère Jacques had decided to whip up support among his EU colleagues by demanding that, when the EU agrees its budget for 2007-2013, the UK must give up its rebate.

After first insisting this was out of the question, Blair upped the ante by saying he might be prepared to negotiate – but only in return for the complete abolition of the common agricultural policy. Chirac was hit where it hurts most, since a quarter of CAP spending goes to French farmers.

This certainly had the desired result of driving Chirac into a paroxysm of rage. But it also set up a buzz of expectation for when Britain took over the EU presidency on 1 July. What concrete proposals would they come up with to abolish the CAP?

On 13 July excitement reached fever pitch when Rosa Klebb herself (aka Mrs Beckett) went to Brussels to set out Britain's plans to members of the European parliament. But as Rosa began expounding in her icily condescending way, it was not long before MEPs were wondering whether they had come to the wrong committee room.

Far from proposing that the CAP should be abolished, she merely came up with some vague suggestions that perhaps CAP spending might be reduced. But not until 2014 at the earliest. However, the EU budget that must be agreed in the next few months is due to start in 2007, and by 2014 it will be all over. In other words, she had no proposal relevant to the current row over the UK rebate at all.

So "evasive" and "misleading" were Rosa's rambling replies to questions that five MEPs stormed out in disgust. Their chairman said that, in all his years on the committee, he had never seen a performance from the "presidency" like it. It had all been "very disappointing"; a complete waste of the MEPs' time.

In one respect, since Rosa does not attempt to hide her contempt for farmers, this was hardly surprising. Much more interesting was what it revealed about the earlier interventions on this subject from the Beloved Leader himself. Mr Blair's demand for the abolition of the CAP had never been intended even remotely seriously.

After all, the reality was that spending on the CAP up to 2013 had been agreed by all the EU leaders including Blair himself, and there was no way it could now be changed. So his dramatic call had been merely an empty political gesture: a tactical strike to get himself off the hook in the spat with Chirac. Now he was off that particular hook, he could leave it to Mrs Beckett to show just what a cynical charade that gesture had been.

'Muckspreader'

THE European court of auditors, the financial watchdog which is supposed to audit European Union income and expenditure, failed to investigate serious allegations of corruption in its own ranks, the *Eye* has learnt.

The court was called into question in 2002 when one of its staff, Dougal Watt, turned whistleblower and made allegations about Mme Kalliopi Nikolaou, a member of the court until 2001. The EU's anti-fraud office OLAF then recommended that Mme Nikolaou be prosecuted for fraud. However, no legal action has been taken against her. Dougal Watt of course was sacked after speaking out (see *Eyes passim*).

The court of auditors claims it only knew of the allegations against Mme Nikolaou in 2002 and that it acted promptly on them. But *Private Eye* has an internal court of auditors document showing that allegations were actually made against Mme Nikolaou early in the previous year.

The document is a minute of an interview with a junior member of staff at the court called Georges Kassimis. It describes allegations against Mme Nikolaou and, though it is dated 14 March 2002, reveals that Mr Kassimis first made his allegations back in February 2001.

The minute shows that Michel Herve and Giorgio Clemente, who are still, respectively, the court's secretary-general and a member of the court, held the meeting with Kassimis to discuss the Nikolaou case. It states that Kassimis "did not understand why OLAF had been informed only now, given that he had informed Mr Kirsch [*the court's head of division*] of his allegations in February 2001."

The minute says that in 2001 Kassimis casually mentioned his allegations to a colleague, who in turn informed Kirsch. Mr Kirsch then arranged a meeting to discuss the issue. According to Kassimis, Kirsch advised him "to keep silent" on the issue.

Mr Kassimis alleged that Mme Nikolaou demanded he give her 40 percent of his salary each month, which he described as "blackmail". He refused, and so his temporary contract was terminated before he was entitled to a pension. Mr Kassimis also alleged that he had to lend Mme Nikolaou around £8,000. He transferred the cash to Mme Nikolaou from the joint bank account he held with his wife. Mme Nikolaou then slowly repaid the money between 1998 and 2001. Kassimis saw the forced loan as "an imperative condition to be able to keep his job".

The court confirmed the document seen by the *Eye* was real; but a spokesperson explained that it was "not aware of the document" when it asserted that no allegation had been made against Mme Nikolaou prior to 2002. This is odd as the most senior members of the court were involved in the meeting with Kassimis, and the minute was signed by secretary-general Herve.

According to EU rules, as soon as the allegations first surfaced the court should have informed the anti-corruption unit OLAF.

PS: IN a separate development the auditors have criticised Olaf, saying its investigations are often "rudimentary" and its "managerial supervision has remained inadequate and results in serious delays in the processing of files, the lodging of inconclusive reports and results that are difficult to identify".

Meanwhile the EU's "conference of presidents" has postponed another hearing into the "damning" report by the EU ombudsman on the case of German journalist Hans-Martin Tillack, whose Brussels home was raided by police after he wrote about skulduggery within Eurostat, the statistics body (see *Eyes passim*).

EU-phemisms

Our policies have left European industry incapable of competing with the Third World

My home nation has a massive contract selling weapons to foreign tyrants

Bomb-balls

"LONDON was the scene of carnage on Thursday after a series of deadly blasts but American R&B crooner Omarion, who suffered no injury or inconvenience, wants people to pray for him. 'Omarion was in London during the tragic bombings that struck this morning,' a statement by the singer's publicist AR PR Marketing, released hours after the bombings, said. Making no mention of the fatalities or casualties of the blasts, the singer's statement concluded: 'He would like his fans to pray that he has a safe trip and a safe return home. He appreciates your support.' – **Reuters**.

"THE management and staff of the Cobden Club wish to pass on there [sic] condolences to all those affected by the tragic events in London yesterday. In these times of trouble it is often easiest to seek sanctuary in the friendly places you know. We hope that at the Cobden Club we can offer you a warm ray of hope and a safe haven away from the madness of the West End. The Club is open as normal this weekend with a wonderful Gourmet Dinner and Wine Tasting available in the restaurant tonight…" – **Message to members of Notting Hill's Cobden Club from general manager Guy Topping.**

"THE tragedies in London help underline how vital it is that businesses and organisations come up with unusually creative answers to build a more just and humane world. The events make us even more determined to continue to offer a ground-breaking conference. The theme is 'The Art of Good Business – Adding Value through Corporate Social Responsibility'. It's organised by the Social Venture Network Europe. Dates: 29 September–1 October." – **Puff for business conference in, er, Italy.**

"AFTER the nation's dramas of last week, it's time to steady ourselves. Shopping here can help; relax and click, and let others enjoy running around for you. Remember too, prices include UK delivery to avoid stress at the checkout; phew!" – **Announcement from interfauna.co.uk, online retailer of cuddly-toy gifts.**

"OUR hearts go out to those involved in the horrific terrorist attacks on London this week. We take inspiration not just from those who fought to save lives, but from all those who continue to strive to deliver a sense of normality back to our capital. In true British fashion we're all determined to deliver 'business as usual'. We're covering current accounts and home insurance this week. Smile, the Co-operative Bank's internet bank account, gives you a decent rate of interest when your current account is in credit... Norwich Union has a deal on at the moment offering half-price contents insurance if you take out buildings insurance with them before the end of September…" – **Email from moneysupermarket.com**

"HELLO. Everyone at annegeddes.com is shocked and saddened by the tragic events in London, and we at this time extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to all of the families and loved ones involved. Our Baby Clothing MOVING SALE is on now and we've just added even more items! SAVE up to 83% on a selection of Playsuits, Tops, Pants, Dresses and much more. Take advantage of these great savings NOW as Anne Geddes Baby celebrates moving into retail…" – **Online clothes shop annageddes.com**

Letters

Private Eye

Telling it str8

Sir,

I'd like to endorse Remote Controller's excellent analogy. The Conservative, Labour and specifically Lib-Dem conferences regularly pull in a world-wide audience of 2.5 billion. The BBC failed to show any footage or accompanying documentaries from the Pro-Poverty side. Hardly a responsible use of licence-payers' money. Every 20 years they simply cancel traditional viewing, like the National Lottery, in favour of tawdry popstars and so-called celebs whipping young people into a frenzy of grotesque pleasure and disgusting political awareness. At least they could have used Paxman instead of Ross to cross-question the self-publicising Geldolf and Bono in their absurd pursuit of "justice" and "humanitarianism".

Furthermore, the BBC is again sacrificing essential programmes to cover the recent London bombings with virtually no interviews showing the terrorists' point of view. It's all victims and no perpetrators. Completely unbalanced! I rest assured Remote Controller will take up this point in the next issue.

Yours,
I. HART,
Switzerland.

Sir,

Remote Controller (RC) is right to criticize some of the BBC Live8 broadcast (Eye 1136). After all it is our money the BBC spent doing so (and many of the DJ links were rubbish). But RC knows that audiences differ and need messages presented in different ways. Jonathan Ross was the right presenter for the event just as a Dimbleby type presenter would have been all wrong.

Live8 did a good job in engaging a broad audience and the BBC did a good job in keeping the serious issue in the frame, with the odd bit of light relief when we needed it. And RC can't seriously believe Geldof was trying to link the original meaning of "I don't like Mondays" to death by famine today. Only old farts know the original meaning of those lyrics anyway.

All best wishes,
DAN MCLEAN
London N22.

Good acoustics

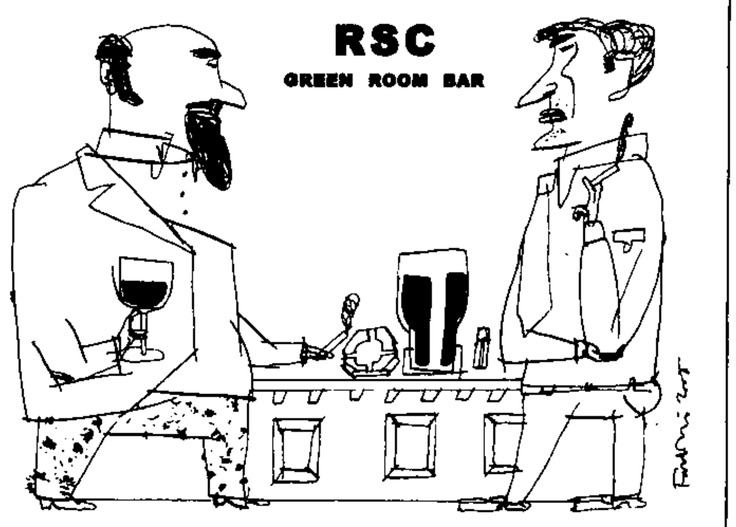
Sir,

Contrary to your clearly hallucinating reporter, Bob Geldof's "Make Poverty History" Glastonbury hand-holding moment **was** *observed in the Acoustic Tent during Chas & Dave's set on the Saturday afternoon. The gig was barely two songs old when Chas, or is it Dave?, asked the audience to put their hands in the air and make as much noise as possible in order to "make poverty 'istry and all that". We did, and the gig continued. As for the crowd being unwilling to interrupt a rousing version of Snooker Loopy, that particular slab of pop genius made its appearance at approximately 4.35, and I should know. That was the moment I'd managed to force my way out of the packed tent, having had more than a gutful of these lovable cockney chancers.*

Sincerely,
KARL MINNS,
Norwich.

● *Thanks for similar letters. Apologies to Chas, Dave, Guardian et al. No more pear cider ever for Eye man at Glastonbury. Ed.*

Scenes You Seldom See



"I'm in our new production of Julius Caesar. It's set in Rome and we're all wearing togas"

Local hero

Sir,

Dr B Ching is quite right. Alistair Darling's support for a new tram in prosperous Edinburgh, at a time when he has rejected proposals for schemes aimed at regenerating Liverpool and Leeds, could not possibly be connected with the fact that he represents an Edinburgh constituency. And, of course, it is equally inconceivable that his support has anything to do with the fact that the new tram would link up the city to Edinburgh Airport where "Aviation Alistair's" recent white paper reckoned a second runway would be a capital idea. I know his only concern is for the welfare of the good citizens of Edinburgh.

JOHN STEWART,
London SW9.

Tanks for the memories…

Sir,

To take tank (Eye 1136) pedantry to a further (yawn) stage: Panzer does not mean tank; it means armour – therefore "Panzer tank" is, strictly, armoured tank, or, in the British, "armoured fighting vehicle" (AFV); or, in the German, "Panzerkampfvagen" [sic] – again AFV – Panzer = armoured; kampf = fight; Vagen [sic] = vehicle.

I'll try to get out more.

Cheers,
DON JONES (EX-BAOR TANKIE),
Runcorn, Cheshire.

Lookalike

Deedes

Biggs

Sir,

Has anyone noticed the remarkable resemblance between Lord Deedes and train robber Ronnie Biggs? Are they related?

ENA B. MAXWELL,
Oxford.

And they point out that global warming could have positive effects which are generally ignored. In Britain, these include rises in house prices which 'tend to be higher in regions with preferred climates'.

Daily Mail

Knackered knackers

Sir,

I refer to the article "Sick Joke" (Police 5, Eye 1135).

I take issue with the assertion that the Metropolitan Police has only just begun to tackle the issue of sickness levels among its staff. During the late 1990s, I was the "Knacker" in charge of Marylebone Division in central London, and concerted efforts to reduce sickness levels across the whole service were undertaken at that time, as they had been on previous occasions. I do not know Inspector Kenny, but to my knowledge attempts to reduce sickness levels had nothing to do with any "campaign" of his – they are just good personnel practice.

Oh, and to be really sad, the reason that Inspector Kenny was not promoted to superintendent is that he could not have been – he would have needed to have been promoted to chief inspector first.

Sorry to be a killjoy!

Yours – and still enjoying your publication,
R.W.T. WOOD,

Former Superintendent and Divisional Commander "Knacker", Marylebone Division, Metropolitan Police (currently advising the Macedonian government on "knackering" matters).

Cutting remarks

Sir,

Re: PC Knacker of Sheffield's assertion that "Possession of a lock knife is an offence per se", and that "Mr Browning can have a knife for work, just one that doesn't lock into position". Utter rubbish! Until the court cases of Harris (1993) and Deegan (1998), a three-inch blade-locking folding knife was considered legal to carry at all times. Currently they fall into the "good reason or reasonable excuse, carried for work, religious reasons, or part of national costume" category. In other words, you can't carry a lock knife at all times, but it's OK to have one in your possession if you have a good reason.

Perhaps PC Knacker ought to trot down the road to consult someone in the Sheffield knife industry, who manufacture, and market, these locking knives in all sizes?

Yours faithfully,
"OLD PLOD".

Monmouth.

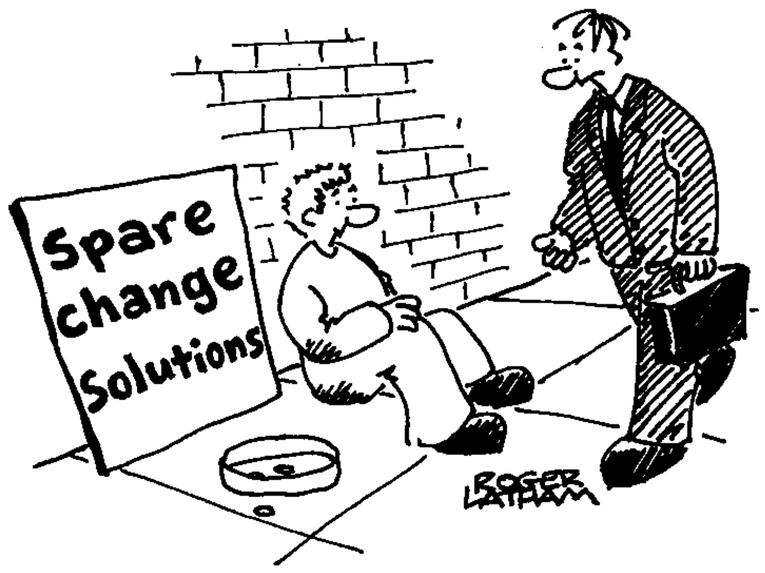
The Italian jibe

Sir,

Surely, if you mock other journalists for their ignorance, you ought at least to know (Street of Shame, 1136) that Italy's national sports newspaper is called La Gazzetta dello Sport, which you seem to have confused with the national daily Corriere della Sera.

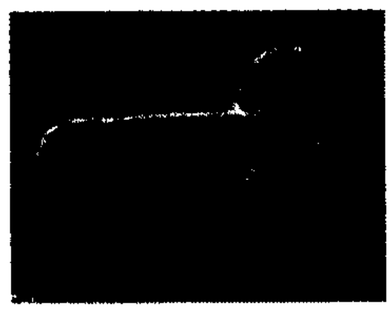
Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS BRANN,

London.



Lookalike

Symbol



Snack

Sir,

I couldn't help but notice the amazing similarity between the phallic symbol found in the desolate ruins of Pompeii and the cheesy puffs on offer on the desolate shelves of Morrisons supermarket. Do others agree that a link established here would call into question current archaeological thinking on ancient Roman leisure activities, and also cast doubt upon the perceived libido of today's Italian male?

Yours sincerely,
LARRY BLOOM,

Ramsey, Isle of Man.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"The fact is that when a suicide bomber strikes once, he or she may strike again."
JOHN SIMPSON, RTE
(Richard Callanan)

"Marcus Trescothick celebrates his one hundredth hundred with a century."
RUSSELL FULLER, Radio 5 Live
(Lance Mitchell)

"I thought I should put my feet where my mouth is."
CARDINAL CORMACK MURPHY O'CONNOR, Radio 4
(Carolyn Brown)

"And Dick Palmer has been with the Olympic Games since he was almost born."
BBC News
(Martin Aylward)

SOLUTIONS

"Liverpool 3, Total Network Solutions 0" – *Welsh football club, formerly Llansantffraid FC, sponsored by local computer company*

"Syngenta believe in delivering better food for a better world through outstanding crop solutions" – *GM crops*

"Avanti has been providing screenmedia solutions to retailers and advertisers since 1996" – *TV screens*

"Brakes, the UK's leading foodservice solutions provider" – *food*

"Dagenham Motors: Imminent and extensive franchise refurbishment at several of our sites across the south has led to the need for a short term used vehicle solution." – *second hand car sale*

"Yellow & Green deliver innovative and creative solutions to marketing solutions" – *brochures*

All submitted by readers

And another thing...

Sir,

Your Remote Controller must have been nodding off during the final of Women's Euro 2005 (Eye 1135). The Denmark team may have nice big smiles, but it was the Norwegian "girls" who played Germany.

Yours nationalistically,
VILHELM LUND,

Ottestad, Norway.

Sir,

Your joke in issue 1135 showed a group of Mohawks laughing at a Huron: the Mohawks with long black hair were wiped out by the Hurons who had the distinctive stripe of hair.

You have seen the film, haven't you?

XPYDA,

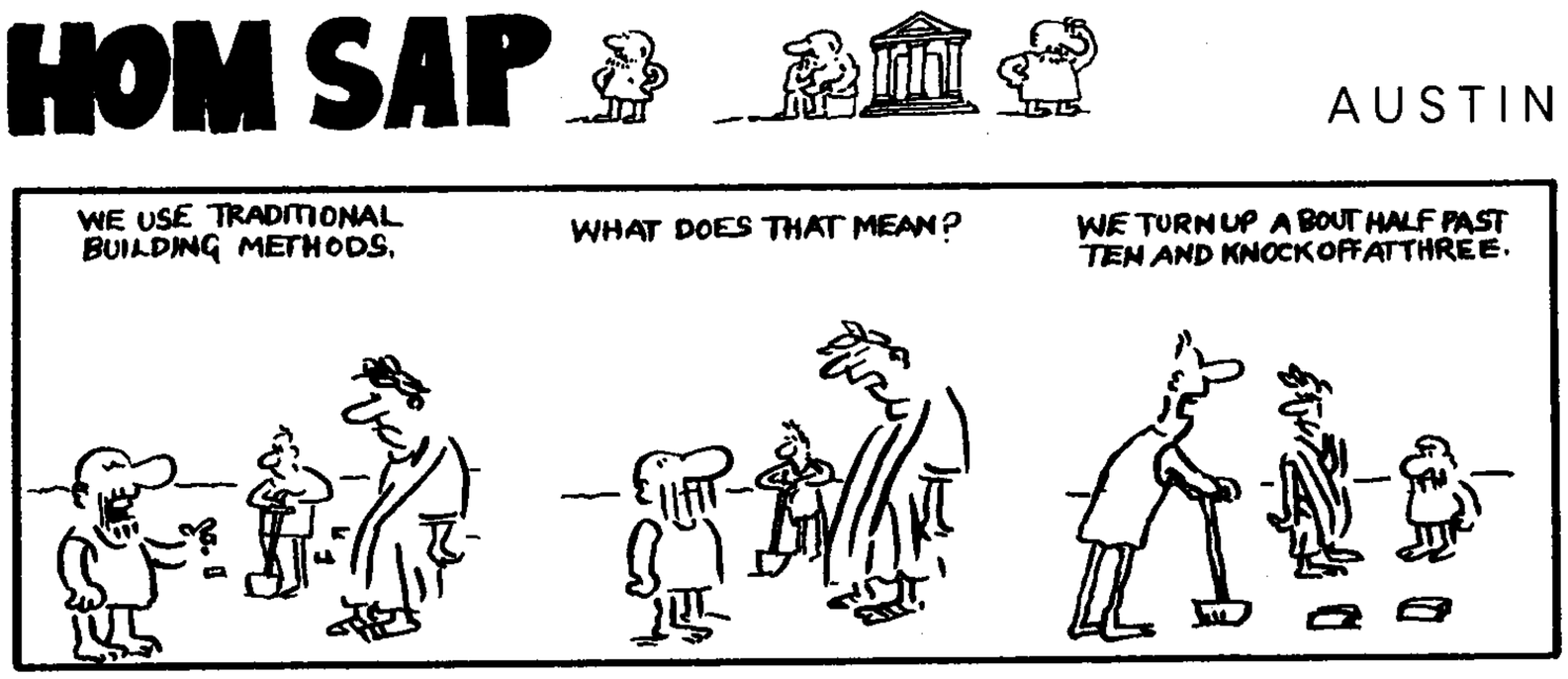
Via email.

Sir,

The writer of your amusing story about the young man graduating was either seeing things – perhaps too much celebratory fizz? – or merely tripping himself up with the usual Anglocentric assumptions. Graduations at the University of St Andrews, like those at our other ancient universities (Aberdeen excepted) and at many of the newer ones, do not involve mortarboards.

DR ALAN R MACDONALD,

Department of History, University of Dundee.


HOM SAP
AUSTIN
WE USE TRADITIONAL BUILDING METHODS.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
WE TURN UP A BOUT HALF PAST TEN AND KNOCK OFF AT THREE.

Letter from **Washington**
from Our Own Correspondent

AL-QA'EDA has come to President Bush's rescue again. You could almost hear the collective sigh of Republican relief wafting across the Potomac as the news from London sank in.

The Bush administration's fans in the media did not even bother to hide their satisfaction. "It sticks terrorism and the fight on the war on terror [sic] right up front all over again," proclaimed Fox News anchor Stuart Varney on 7 July. The message was dutifully repeated by pro-Bush pundits from coast to shining coast.

Former national security council director and "terror expert" Philip Bobbitt pontificated in the *New York Times* on 10 July that the London attacks "are part of the terrible price we are paying for resisting terror" in Iraq and Afghanistan. The lesson of the attacks, he proclaimed was: "Be sober. Be watchful. Our enemy prowls around us like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

This is the very message that key presidential aide Karl Rove, VP Dick Cheney and others ruthlessly promoted during last year's election campaign, in which the global war on terror (the GWOT as it is known inside the Beltway) took centre stage. "Be very afraid," we were effectively told. "If you don't vote for us you'll die."

But last month, as Washington sank into the air-conditioned torpor that overtakes our capital city between Independence Day and Labour Day, even the slavishly supine media were finding it hard to conceal the fact that the Bush team had lost the plot of the GWOT.

Our kiss-up-kick-down administration was stumbling. Cheney was claiming absurdly that the insurgency in Iraq was in its "last throes". The CIA was reporting that the war in Iraq was a gift to al-Qa'eda and was providing Islamist militants with training in a new kind of urban warfare. The Valerie Plame case was threatening to expose the lies and criminal manipulations the White House used to justify the Iraq war.

In a desperate effort to halt the slide in his ratings, Bush came on national TV on 28 June. But all he could do was wheel out the old lie about the link between 9/11 and Iraq, reassert the canard that "we have to defeat them abroad before they attack us at home", and talk up his failing Iraq "exit strategy". "As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down," he told us, apparently unaware that Iraqis (and Afghans) are already standing up in increasing numbers – but to fight US military occupation.

Meanwhile, the administration's plans for reform in the "Greater Middle East" have been looking hallucinogenic. Condi Rice, our self-styled brain-box national security adviser, toured the region last month pushing for democracy in friendly countries like Egypt while condemning it in Iran. She made no mention during her Arab democracy road show of the fact that our security folks have been using the torture chambers of Egypt and other non-democratic allies in the Middle East to extract information from Islamist suspects they pick up all over the world in the GWOT. Nor did she mention the probability that free elections in Egypt would lead to a victory for the Muslim Brotherhood and increase the risk of an Arab-Israeli war.

In normal circumstances, the London bombings would provide yet more proof that the Bush strategy is flawed and dangerous. Yet so debased has the debate on terrorism and the Middle East become here that the administration can brazenly claim that the London attacks justify its misguided policies. As the commander-in-chief put it: "The war on terror goes on."

The populist/fundamentalist/plutocratic coalition which has captured power in Washington learned long ago that escalation of the GWOT is a wonderful way to distract attention from the administration's failures, lies and misdemeanours, of stifling serious political debate, of curtailing civil liberties, of whipping up vote-winning patriotism, of making billions more from military/security/oil contracts, and of hastening the Second Coming of the Lord. It's a no-brainer.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

"Officials from our hygiene department were doing their routine job of checking the abattoir fridges," a City Hall spokesman told reporters in Lima, " when one of them noticed a frog jumping out. Further investigation led him to several large crates, which he ordered the staff to open. Inside were thousands of Titicaca frogs, about 4,000 live ones and another 1,000 that had already died. Obviously, they were a wholesale delivery, on their way to frog juicing shops, to be liquidised and turned into Peruvian viagra."

The spokesman was describing attempts by the Peruvian government to combat the illicit trade in Telmatobius culeus, an endangered species known locally as the Titicaca frog. "There's a growing problem in cities like Lima and Arequipa, because many men are convinced that these frogs are an aphrodisiac, that they're better than viagra, and without the risk of a heart attack. There are several frog juicers operating in this city, in shops where customers can choose their own frog from a tank. It's then dropped live into a household blender, along with water, honey, and a local tuber, and whizzed into a frog cocktail that is drunk immediately for maximum potency. Although the frogs are an endangered species, we only have powers to protect them when they're in transit, not in the shops, and there's an increasing market for them. A recent television report estimated that 150 live frogs are needed each day to satisfy Lima's demand for frog juice, and that figure fits with our own estimates."

The frogs were taken to a colonial fountain in the city centre to splash around, before being returned to their native lakes by ecological police. *(The Age [Australia], 29/4/05. Spotter: Peter Blake)*

– o –

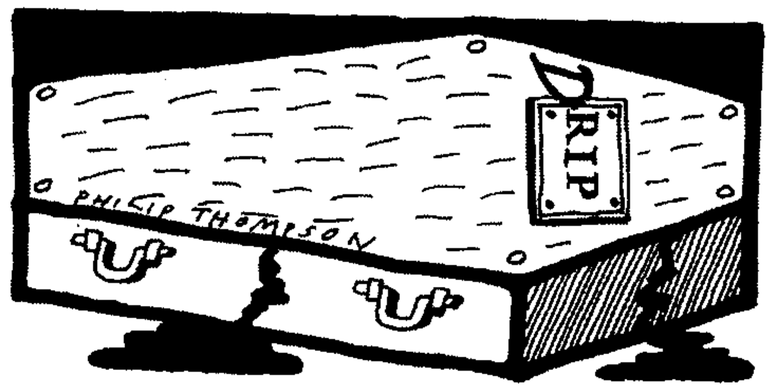
Biblical Jesus Puppet. Jesus is a beautiful full body, half body, rod arm puppet. This big mouth puppet is 30 inches tall, and has removable legs, mouth straps, 1.5 inch neck movement, same fabric throughout, and comes with one puppet rod. This religious puppet is an excellent choice for puppet ministry. Use him to teach scripture and for bible lessons. Fully functional for both children and adults, and can be used as a full body, or remove the legs to make a lightweight rod-style half body puppet.

This Jesus puppet was designed to depict Christ in a loving, kind, approachable way. He has natural tanned flesh tone and big brown eyes, and is dressed in a garb of the biblical days, with sandals and a satin deep red shawl that represents the blood shed on the cross. All of this big mouth puppet's clothes are completely removable, including his shoes. You can enter this lovely puppet from either the back in a ventriloquist puppet style, or from the bottom like a standard half body puppet. A plastic attachment is available to make the puppet appear to walk on water. This fully functional Muppet-style performance puppet of Our Saviour has been made affordable for puppet ministries on a tight budget. Your price $36.95.

Also available: Biblical Angel Hand puppet; Biblical Shepherd Boy; Biblical Man; Biblical Old Man; Biblical Girl; Biblical Roman Soldier; Biblical Camel. (Puppet Revelation catalogue, May 2005. Spotter: Aidan Dowling)

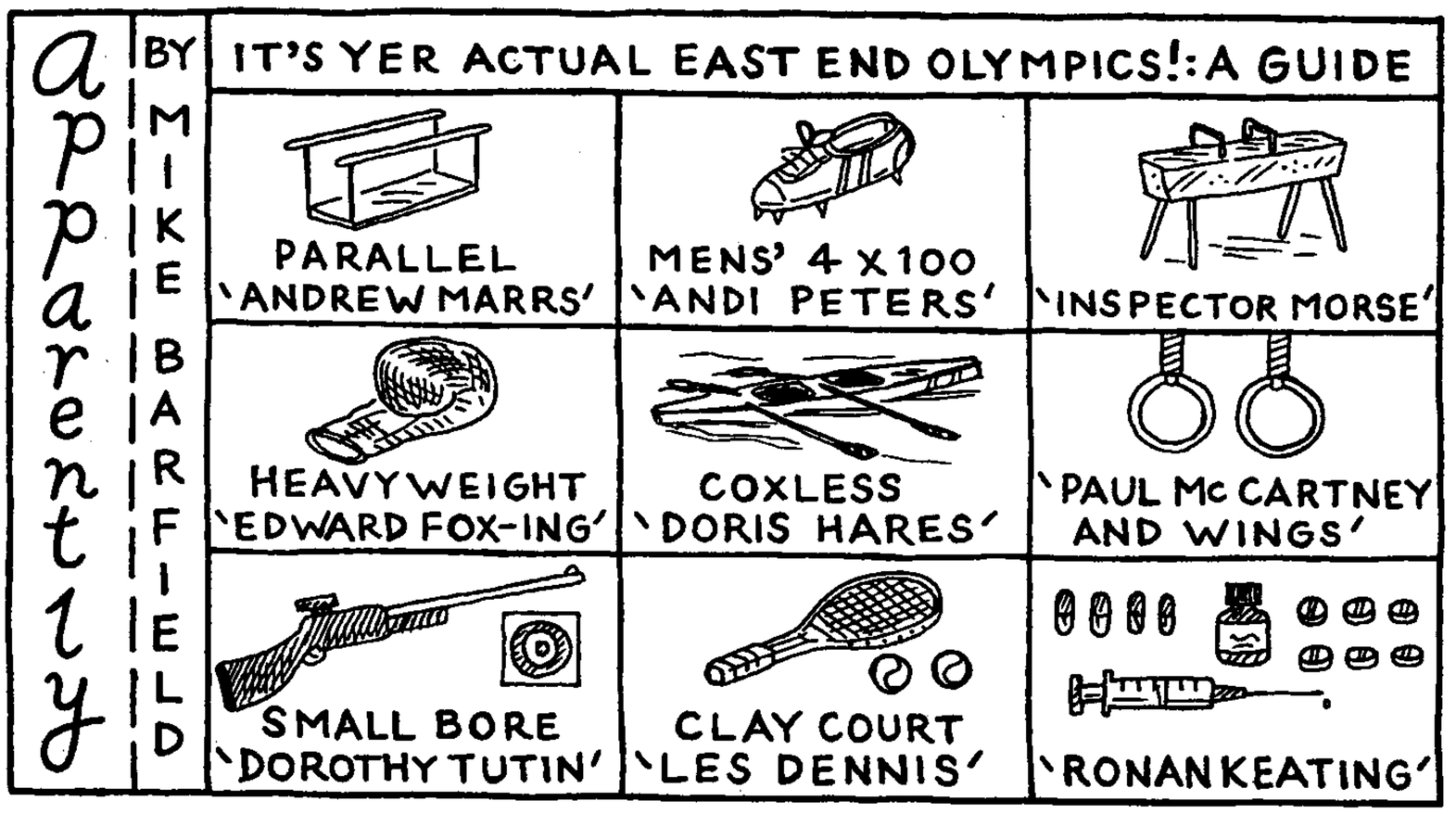
– o –

"According to witness accounts, Joseph Delcasse collapsed and died on January 1st," a police spokesman told reporters in Port-au-Prince. "His body was taken to La Conscience funeral home, where the family paid in advance for a grave to be dug, and for an elaborate funeral service to be held at the local chapel next day. But when they arrived at the chapel, as the funeral was about to begin, they noticed that blood was dripping from the coffin, and demanded that the service should be stopped.



They called in the police, who opened up the casket, and found that Mr Delcasse's body was covered in multiple stab wounds.

"The owner of the funeral home and the gravedigger were both arrested and taken to Petion-Ville prison, where they both confessed to murder. It seems that Mr Delcasse had not been dead at all, as the family had thought, he was in a coma. As his body was being laid out in the funeral home, he had suddenly woken up, and the two men had both grabbed knives and killed him, then proceeded with laying out the body as though nothing had happened. At first, the gravedigger insisted that this was because they thought he was a zombie who had come back from the dead, but eventually the owner of the home admitted to a more prosaic motive. The funeral had been paid for in advance, the grave had already been dug, and he simply could not bear the thought of losing all that money." *(Khaleej Times, 15/1/05. Spotter: C.D. Harbin)*



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

And let me begin by saying how deeply touched I have been by the messages which have been flooding into the vicarage from all over the world, thanking me simply for being here.

At moments of great crisis, people instinctively turn to someone they know they can trust. Someone who will find the right words for the occasion. Someone who will be able to put on the right sort of sad face, as I was able to do on a former occasion, after the death of our beloved 'People's Princess'.

Can I just quote from some of the very moving tributes which I have received in recent days from all manner of parishioners, even those who in the past have criticised me for no good reason.

"Dear Vicar," starts one from a local solicitor, a Mr Howard, "In times of crisis, such as this, we look for a certain type of moral leadership. Someone who is capable of rising to the occasion and displaying the supreme qualities of vicarmanship, as you did in that unforgettable sermon where you told us all that it was 'a very sad day' and that it wasn't your fault."

There were hundreds, if not thousands, of similar messages. Letters, texts, emails, even floral tributes placed along the railings of the vicarage.

But there's always someone, isn't there, who wants to try and spoil everything for everyone else.

In this case, I might have known that it would be our friend Mr Galloway, who started heckling from the back of the church that if it hadn't been for my support for the Rev. Dubya in his crusade against the Evil One, then none of these sad events would have happened.

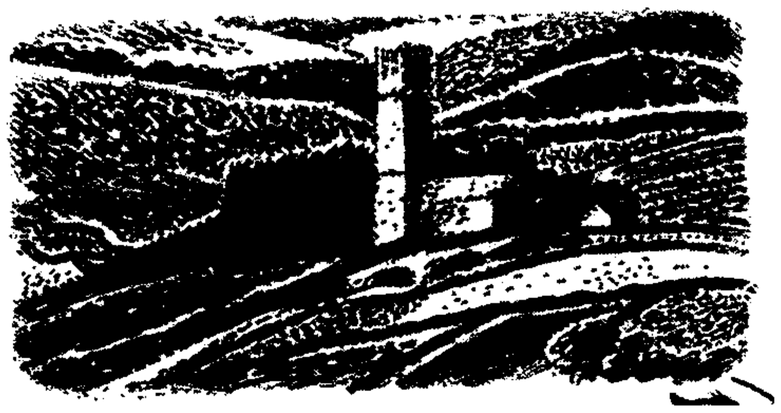
Talk about bad taste! At a time when the whole community is united in grief, how dare he start looking around for the cause of it?

Should he not show a modicum of respect for all those people who are supporting their vicar, and who certainly don't want to be listening to the lunatic ravings of some embittered Scotsman!

And, talking of embittered Scotsmen, I hope we have now heard the last of all that talk about me retiring and handing the parish over to someone else (Mr Brown might have some idea who I am talking about!).

If one thing has become certain in the past few weeks, it is that "all has now changed utterly, in the twinkling of an eye," as the Good Book has it.

And let's not be fooled by that old cliché about "no one being indispensable"



that may be true most of the time, but there are occasions when someone proves to be exactly that!

After all, that word is from the Latin 'indispensibilis', meaning a person who, if he was to resign, would bring about the collapse of our entire Western civilisation!

Yours (in Dispensibly!),

Tony

Not True!!

The former editor of this newsletter has instructed us to publish the following statement on his behalf, in relation to his recent business trip to New Zealand to promote the tour made by the St Albion's Lions rugby football team.

*I am f****** sickened by some of the f****** garbage which certain scumbags in the local media have chosen to write about my part in the failure of our local rugby team to win a single game "down under". It has even been alleged on the St Albion's Hospital Radio that I know f*** all about f****** rugby! So f****** what I ask! I know a f*** of a lot about boxing, and all I can say is that if I ever meet any of these c**** again, I will smash their f****** faces in. The only things that will be "all black" will be their f****** eyes! Understood?*

Signed Alastair Campbell,
Chief Communications and
Corporate Relations Director,
The St Albion's Lions World Tour
email al.camp@fujimmy.co.uk

The vicar thinks he might still be around to hand out the prizes! As seen by local artist Mr de la Nougerede.

A Word of Thanks

Once again we should record our heartfelt gratitude to Mr Mittal for giving £2 million to parish funds. Mr Mittal's solicitor has asked me to make it clear that were anyone to suggest that Mr Mittal is expecting anything whatever in return for his generous gift, then such a person would have to face the full rigour of the law. Mr Mittal's privacy is very important to him, which is why he has made this anonymous donation. He is so private that even Mr Mandelson does not know where he lives! (No offence, Peter, and thanks to Mr Bremner for this excellent joke!)

Of course, Lord Mittal is not looking for any personal preferment. His only motivation in making this very handsome donation was to express his sincere admiration for everything the Vicar has done for the parish, especially the business community, and even more especially the Anglo-Romanian Steel Trading Community. Anyone who suggests to the contrary may find themselves looking at a privacy suit for which the likely damages might well equate to a sum, shall we say, of around £2 million (or the number you first thought of). T.B.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MR BYERS, who served on the PCC (Railway Sub-committee) some time ago, tells me "I may have told a lie but it was a long time ago and I can't remember if I did or if I did why I did. So perhaps I didn't."

Mr Byers prays for forgiveness

This shows that Mr Byers acted in good faith and there is no need for him to be punished. As the good book "Thou shalt not bear false witness except under very special circumstances". *(Book of Trains 7.15)*

A letter from Mr Blunkett's solicitors, Bindweed and Bindweed

Dear Sir,

Our attention has been drawn to a musical entertainment currently being produced by the St Albion Players entitled "Yes Sir, That's My Baby".

My client, Mr David Blunkett, formerly of the Neighbourhood Watch, takes grave exception to the above and gives notice that unless the play ceases forthwith he will take action under the recently passed Prevention of Plays About David Blunkett Act (2005)

Signed,
Geoffrey Blindman

NO CONNECTION BETWEEN ISLAM AND TERROR

by Our Man At Scotland Yard **P.C. P.C.**

LONDON'S top policeman, Chief Superintendent "Knacker of the Yard" Knacker, yesterday called a special press conference in the wake of the London bombings to explain that in the view of London's police service there was no connection whatever between what he was about to say and common sense.

"Just because these bombs were let off by Muslims," he went on, "it does not follow that there is any link between the bombers and the religion of Islam."

"My officers," he concluded, "will be focusing their efforts largely on members of the Church of England and other fanatical groups – especially those who are known to be linked to extremist organisations such as the Women's Institute."

LATE NEWS

KNACKER'S TRIUMPH
Dead men arrested

INSPECTOR KNACKER last night announced that, "Thanks to a triumph of forensic detection" the four men responsible for the London bombings had all been arrested.

"The breakthrough came" he said, "when we uncovered evidence of the four men's identify, giving their names and addresses and the words "we did it – we want to be martyrs to the cause of Islamic terrorism".

RED KEN DEMANDS TWO-YEAR SILENCE

by Our London Staff **Pearl E. King**

THE MAYOR of London, Ken Livingstone, today called for all Londoners to observe a two-year silence about his disastrous meeting last year with the fanatical Muslim extremist Yusuf al-Kardawi.

"As a gesture of respect to myself," said the Mayor, "I would ask everyone to keep very quiet about the fact that I invited to London a man who preaches the kind of hatred that leads to people thinking that they can go round blowing up London."

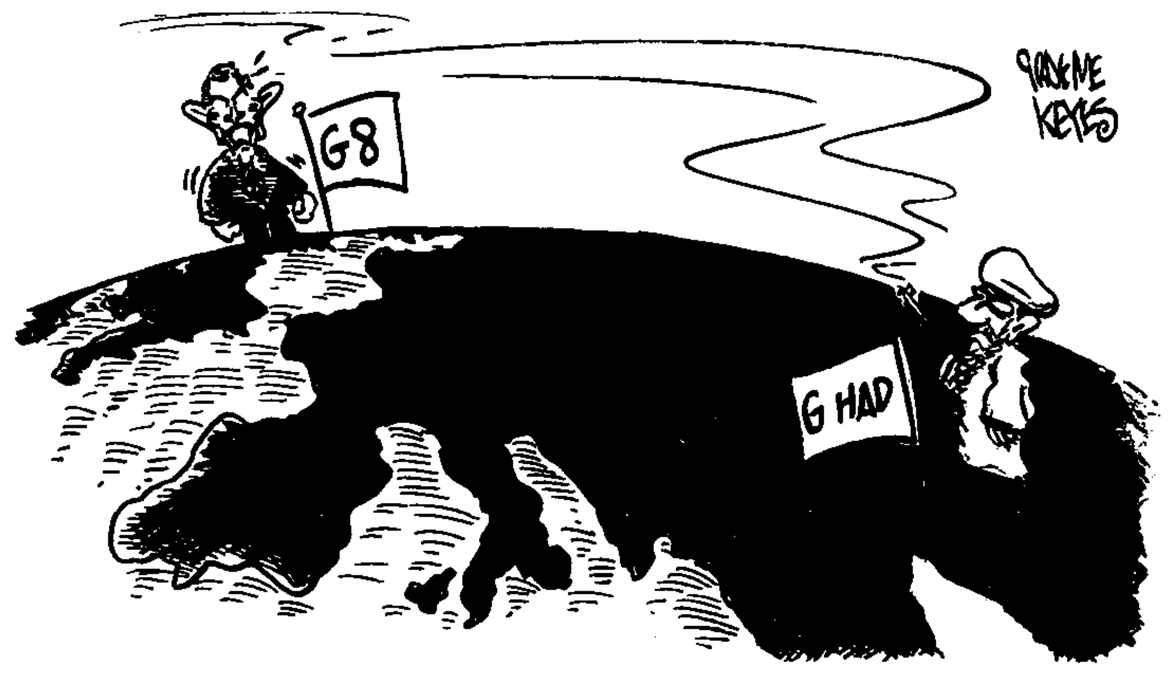
"You can't say that!"

An Apology

IN COMMON with all other newspapers we may have given the impression that we deplored suggestions that there was some sort of link between the recent London bombings and Mr Blair's invasion of Iraq. Headlines such as "String Up Traitor Galloway!", "String Up Traitor Salmond!" and "String Up Traitor Kennedy!" may have led readers to believe that we felt it was in bad taste to make a connection between the two events, as these politicians had done.

In the light of the recent report by the highly prestigious and respected ISTBO (Institute Of Stating The Bleeding Obvious), we now realise that there may well be a link after all.

We apologise for any embarrassment to ourselves.



★ BAGHDAD TIMES ★

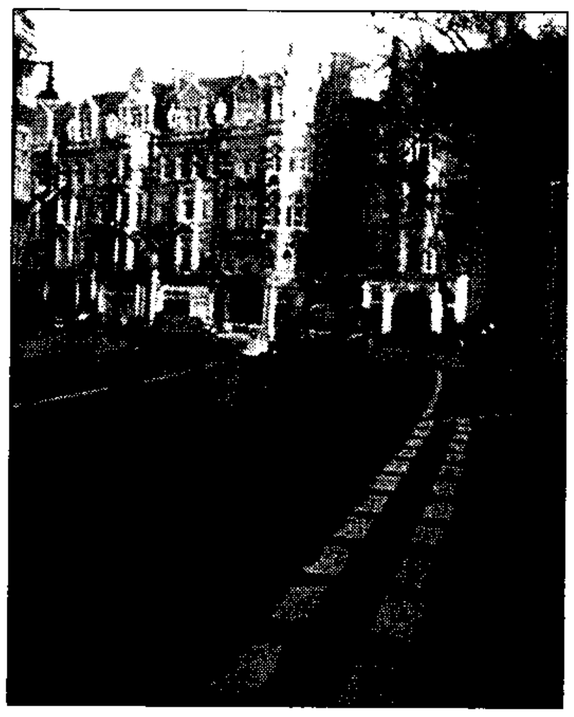
Friday 22 July 2005

LONDON 'EERILY CALM'

by Our Man In London

THE STREETS of London were eerily calm today as the city enjoyed its tenth consecutive day with-out a suicide bombing killing scores of innocent men, women and children.

It's hard for those living in Baghdad to imagine a place so tranquil and peaceful that it only has to endure one act of unspeakable carnage a fortnight (cont'd p. 94).



To all BBC news personnel

From Ms Helen Boaden-Catalogue, Head of the News Programme Programming Directorate

URGENT

The use in BBC news programmes of the word "terrorist" must cease forthwith. This emotive term suggests a value judgement which is likely to offend a significant proportion of our news-audience profile. In terms of our charter obligations it is vital in this respect to maintain a strict sense of neutrality. In future, those responsible for engaging in the delivery of explosive devices to users of the public transport system must on all occasions be referred to not as "terrorists" but as "members of the bombing community".

New link to open in time for the Olympics

KINGS CROSS — BAGHDAD

NB: Link also stops at Red Kennington

Exclusive to all right-wing newspapers

IS TONY BLAIR THE GREATEST MAN IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD?

THE events of recent days have made one thing clear. Our prime minister now towers like a colossus over the world stage. Just consider the dazzling series of triumphs which have made him the greatest statesman of this or any other age.

First, he solved the problems of Europe. Then he solved the problems of Africa by abolishing poverty. Then he saved the world from the catastrophe of global warming. And that was just the start of it.

His next astonishing feat was single-handedly to bring the golden prize of the Olympics home to Britain.

But all this paled into insignificance beside the extraordinary fashion in which he rallied the nation's spirits in its darkest hour, following the London bombings.

Generations yet unborn will thrill to his Churchillian oratory which reawakened the British spirit of defiance: "I would like to thank the emergency services", "the police are doing an excellent job" and "we are looking at urgent new measures in relation to the prevention of terrorism".

There can be no talk now of Mr Blair retiring. Indeed it is unthinkable that he should ever be allowed to retire.

How would our world survive without him?

We would be left in a darkening world where terrorists would feel free to let off bombs in London streets, where millions of Africans were dying of poverty, where the icecaps would melt and where French farmers would continue to receive huge sums of money from the British taxpayer.

Absurd? You may think so. Yet it is this nightmare scenario which would engulf us all, were it not for the presence of Sir Winston Blair, the greatest man who ever lived.

© *Everybody.*

SIR JEREMY GREENBORE'S STARTLING CLAIMS IN FULL

The amazing book that the Government won't let you read!

SIR JEREMY GREENBORE, the former ambassador to Iraq, lifts the lid on the incredible truth behind the invasion of Iraq.

1. The Iraq war wasn't a very good idea.

2. Bush made a mess of things.

3. Blair should never have gone along with it.

4. Er...

5. That's it.

Yes! It's the book they are calling the new Harry Potter.
Order your copy now!

Mr David Blunkett's moving message of condolence after the London bombings

"I feel very sorry about the way I have been treated and if I had been home secretary this would never have happened. My thoughts go out to myself in my hour of sadness."

Olga the dog
pp D. Blunkett

RADIO FOUR

What You Didn't Miss

THE TODAY PROGRAMME

Jim Naughtie *(for it is he)*: ...and doesn't that mean that we're going to have to re-evaluate the whole way in which we attempt to structure our response to acts of... I'm sorry, we've run out of time for my question, so we'll have to leave it there before you can answer. And now, it's Thought For The Day with the Rev. J.C. Flannel.

Rev. Flannel: At this tragic time, when all our thoughts are going out to the families and loved ones of the bombers, there's been a lot of confusion and bewilderment about the role of Islam in all this. And I think it helps to remember what the word 'Islam' means. It comes from the Arabic word for 'peace'. And let's look at some of the other words used by our Muslim friends, which also give rise to a lot of misunderstanding. We often hear, for instance, the word 'jihad'. But how many people know that this means 'coffee morning'? So, let's not get distracted from the things that really matter in today's world. The most important moral challenge confronting us all today is the issue of whether women should become bishops. In a very real sense... *(cont. 94 kHz)*

"Er, let's see, I've got 'No to bullying', 'I love you', 'Say no to poverty', but I'm afraid there's no 'Jihad against the infidels'."

94 PAGE TERROR SPECIAL

LONDONERS GO BACK TO WORK

By **Phil Space**

THERE were astonishing scenes of defiance this week as Londoners returned to work following the terrorist attack on the City.

The whole world had expected Londoners to abandon their jobs and homes and simply spend the rest of their lives hiding under a piece of tarpaulin in a country field, but against all the odds they appear determined to show the world that they will not be cowed by terrorists... er... um... *(You're fired. Ed.)*

LONDON CAN TAKE IT! SPIRIT OF BLITZ LIVES AGAIN

By **Phil Space**

WE CAN SURVIVE! That was the gutsy response of millions of Londoners when they woke up to the shocking news that their city was to be subjected to the Olympic Games.

Said one cab driver, 76-year-old Monty Snozzer, "We lived through the Second World War – they're not going to frighten us with a few velodromes and indoor volleyball parks."

Said traffic warden Kofi Onanugu, "Of course London can take it! We're a multi-cultural city with a great heart. Synchronised swimmers don't scare me!"

This bravely defiant stance was echoed all across the capital, from Cricklewood to Crouch End, from Hanger Lane to Hainault, from Kensington to Kentish Town.

Said one Euston hotelier, Ahmed von Weidenfeld, "That tariff is out of date, mate. It's now £360 a room, plus VAT – payment in advance." *(You're definitely fired. Ed.)*

SUICIDE BOMBERS 'NORMAL PEOPLE'

By **Phil Space**

IT's astonishing to discover that the four suicide bombers who attacked London were, according to reports, 'normal people'. One liked sport. Another owned a car. One had a house... with doors... and windows. Another had parents. All of them had heads.

Perhaps all we can really conclude is that their normalness was so normal that their normalness was abnormal in its normality. *(You're really are fired now. Ed.)*

CONSERVATIVE PARTY DIES

End of long and distinguished career

by our Political Staff **Simon Hefferhump**

AT THE age of 194 the Conservative Party lost its fight for life yesterday in a nursing home in Tunbridge Wells. The party was known to have been unwell for a long time, suffering a number of serious conditions including Hague's syndrome, IDS and, latterly, Howard's Disease, all of which left it weak and debilitated.

In latter years it became a tragic spectacle and did not even know who it was. Said one political observer Alan de Watneys, "It was a pathetic sight to see it in the House of Commons, unable to speak and getting grumpier and more bitter as the days passed."

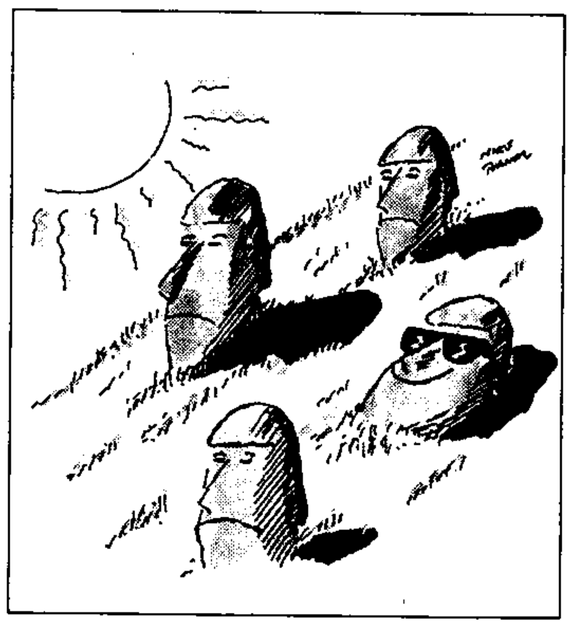
O Heath, where is thy sting?

He continued, "This once great party was reduced to a shambling wreck."

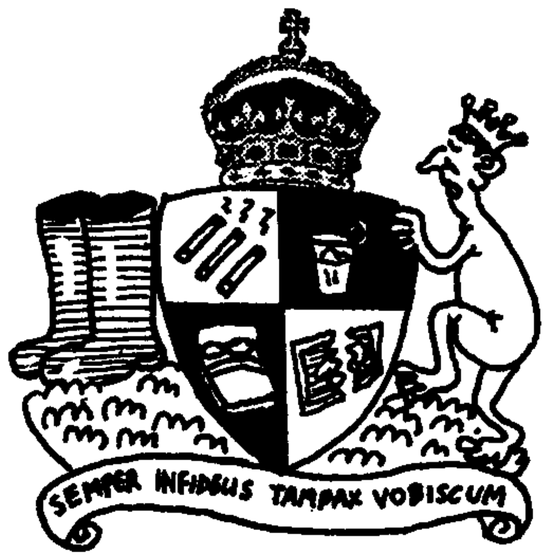
Meanwhile tributes poured in from no-one at all as the nation failed to mourn the greatest political party in history.

William Deedes

The Tory Party I Remember



WHEN I first met Disraeli he struck me at once as an odd sort of cove. He wore green socks which is always the sign of a rum 'un. So when he passed the Reform Bill in 1867 I knew that we were in for a rough ride *(cont. p. 94)*



Sir Hugh Montgomery Massivesnob writes

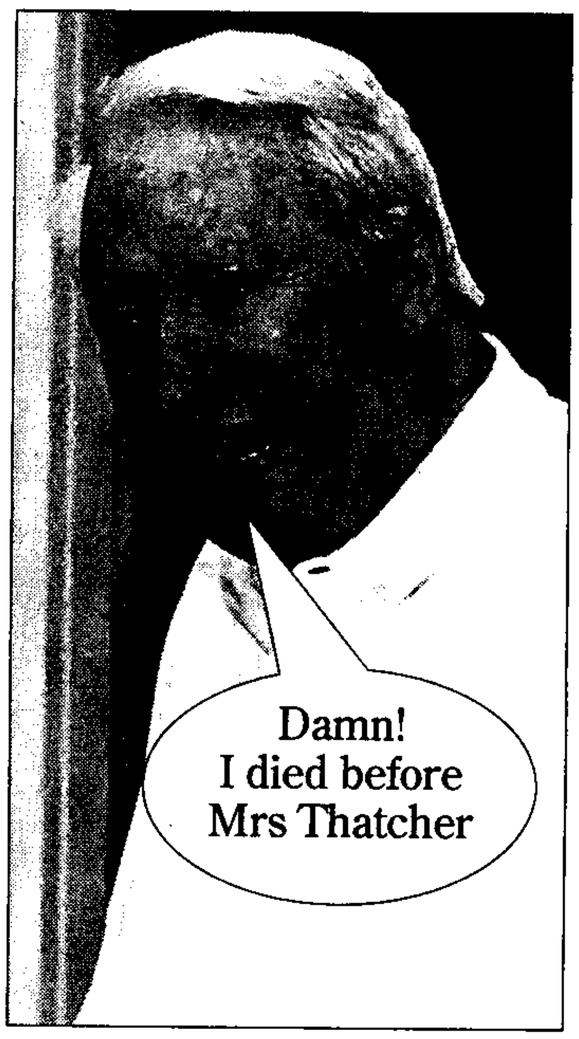
The Duchess of Cornwall has been granted a Royal Coat of Arms to mark her 58th birthday. The shield is flanked by an old boar (the symbol of the Prince of Wales) and a pair of green wellington boots rampant, the family crest of the Parker Knowles family.

The shield itself is split into four quadrants depicting heraldic motifs appropriate to the Duchess. Three cigarettes poursuivant; a glass of gin and tonic sinister; a large bed, king-size; and a photograph of Princess Diana, torn in half.

The Latin mottos, "Semper infidelis" and "Tampax Vobiscum" refer to incidents in the Duchess' courtship of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

News in Brief

- Grumpy old man dies
- Book published: people buy it
- Dim actor goes off with nanny
- Politician tells lie
- Footballer's wife goes to nightclub
- Summer brings hot weather



WEST END HIGHLIGHTS

Death Of A Grocer

by Sir Ronald Miller

TRAGIC story of a one-time Prime Minister who tried to sell Conservative policies and live "the British Dream".

His life, however, was a sad fantasy and his chirpy catchphrase "Hello Sailor!" belied a lonely and broken man with only his memories to keep him company.

As the story unfolds, we realise that a chance encounter with a mysterious woman wrecked his life...

"The terrorists only want the oxygen of publicity..."

"...read all about it"

PAKISTAN'S TOP-SELLING NEWSPAPER

DAILY MULLAH

22 July 2005

INSIDE THE SCHOOL OF DEATH

by Lunchtime No Booze

Our man goes inside St Cakes, the famous British Madrassa to see how students are brainwashed into the British way of life.

THE DAY begins with the sinister sound of a bell summoning the pupils to prayer. Here they listen to the fanatical ravings of the chaplain, Rev Tristan de Vere Kipling. His theme today "Keeping a straight bat in the great game of life".

Day after day they are subjected to a relentless programme of brainwashing which is designed to make them believe there are two sides to every argument and even more shockingly that one day England can win the Ashes.

I spoke to a typical pupil, Fotherington-Thomas (Barkworths) who unashamedly told me his mission in life was to "play up and play the game".

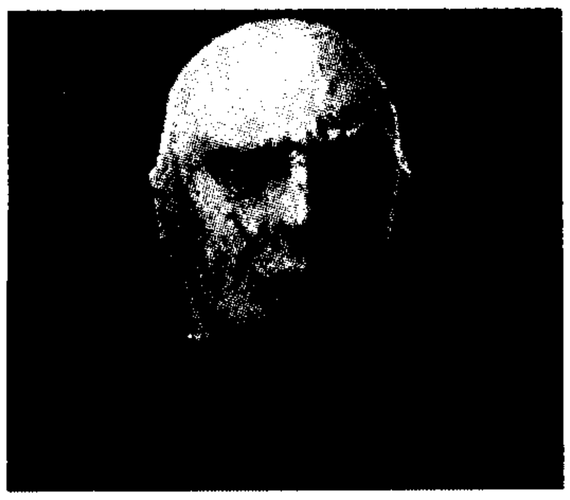
HUGE FEES

In his desk he openly showed me a copy of "his bible" The Wisden Cricket Almanac (containing technical details of how to make a century) and by his bed he had placed a photograph of the schools pin-up – Miss Liz Hurley.

Yes, on the outside Fotherington-Thomas seems like a typical easygoing teenager but inside there is no doubt that this confused adolescent has only one ambition, to end his life as a solicitor in Haywards Heath and *(You're fired, Ed)*

BLAIR IN NEW CRONY ROW

by Our Political Staff **Simon Hogwarts**



THE PRIME MINISTER was embroiled in yet another scandal about "cronyism" when allegations about his friend Lord Voldemort surfaced yesterday in a document entitled *Harry Potter and the Half Million Pound Donation.*

One expert who has had access to the documents, Jemima, aged 7, said, "It is a complete mystery why Voldemort has been made a Lord. None of his contemporaries, such as Dumbledore or Snape, have been ennobled and to be honest, Lord Voldemort has a dodgy past involving the black arts."

She continued, "The only explanation that I can think of is that he has gone to Gringots Bank, taken out a vast number of gold galleons and given them all to the Labour Party."

A spokesman for Lord Voldemort denied the allegations and said that anyone who repeated them would immediately be sued for libel and turned into a toad.

On Other Pages

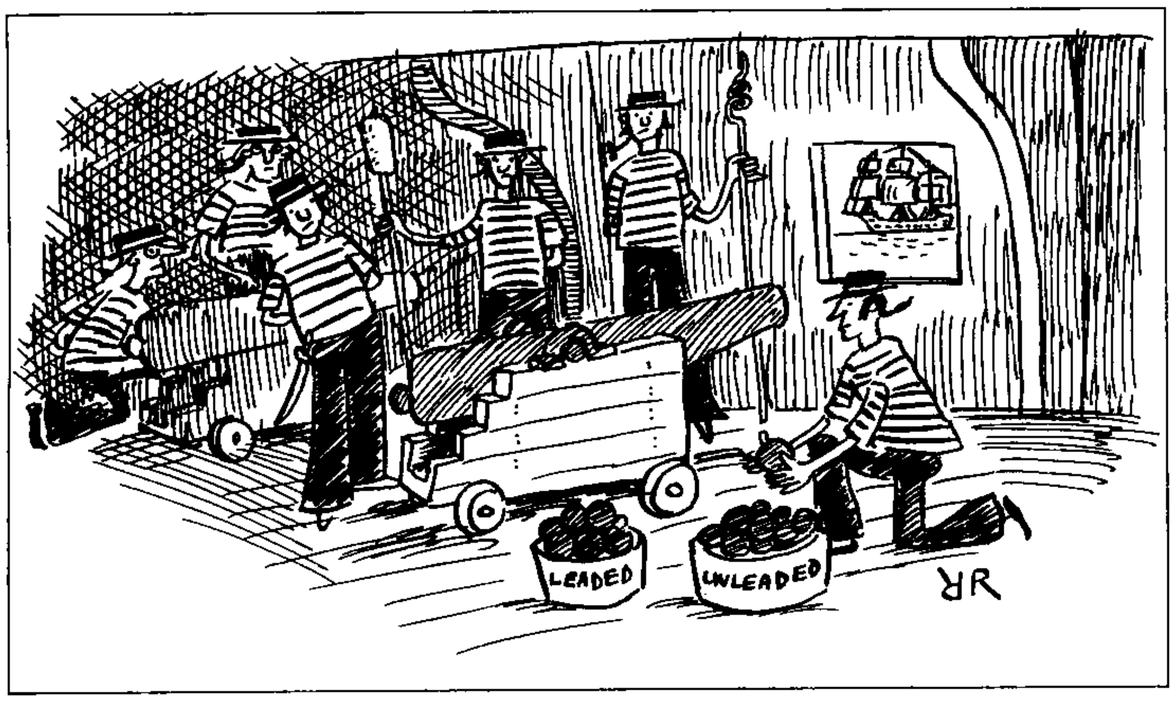
- Australian Quidditch Team Thrash England In First Test – What Went Wrong? **1**
- Draco Malfoy gets ASBO **2**
- Your Trains Tonight **9¾**

'COMIC BOOK CHARACTER LIKE BUSH' SAYS HILLARY

by Our U.S. Political Correspondent **Badly Drawn Boy**

HILLARY CLINTON has astonished guests at a Washington fund-raising event by comparing MAD magazine's much-respected figurehead, Alfred E. Neuman, to the comic book idiot President George Bush, famous internationally for his dumb catchphrase 'What? Me Worry About Iraq?'.

A spokesman for Mr Neuman said he wouldn't be gracing the Democratic presidential hopeful's comments with a response, saying the American people can tell the difference between a much-loved public figure like himself and a two-dimensional buffoon like George Bush.



Mary Ann Bighead

YES – IT'S THE big debate in the Bighead family. Should my daughters, Brainella and Intelligencia be allowed to watch television? There can only be one answer – NO. Because in the Bighead family we use our leisure time to do something a bit more intellectual than sitting around watching the goggle box!

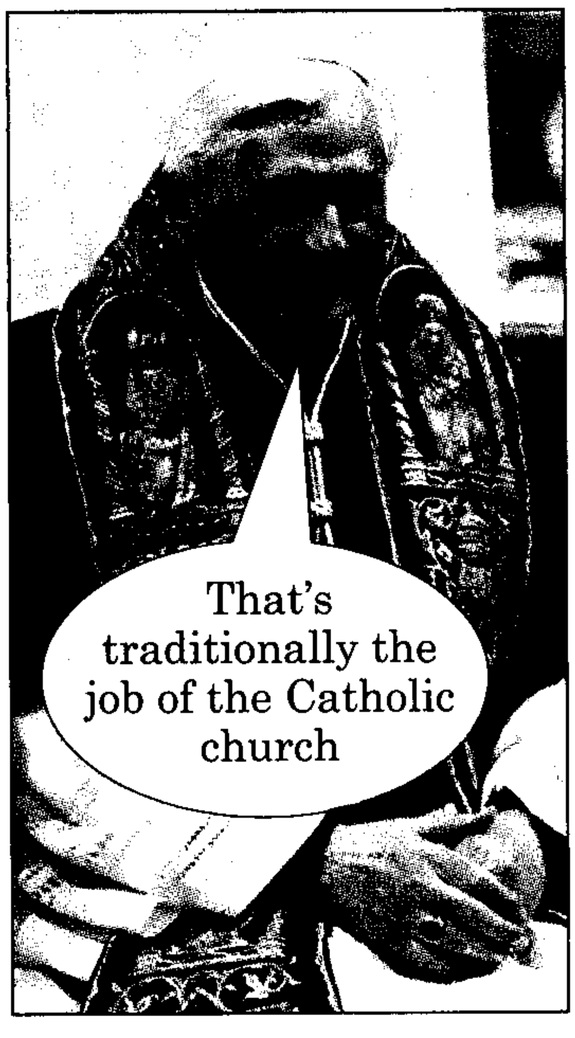
I point out to Brainella that if she had wasted all those hours watching Celebrity Big Brother Island (or some such!) then she would never have completed her first symphony at the age of seven or written a novel at the age of nine. Meanwhile Intelligencia makes the point that living in a media-centric household they should perhaps be exposed to the wider culture of their peer group and their society.

This is a very clever remark coming from a three-year-old but I stand firm and suggest instead that we all play a fun family game such as translating the Odyssey from ancient Greek into Russian and back again. I can honestly say that in the blessed absence of the noxious cathode ray tube (!) the entire Bighead clan enjoyed a healthy balanced family evening together – except for me because I had to go off and be very clever on BBC TV's Question Time. Such is life!

© Mary Ann Bighead

Old Nursery Rhymes

POPE CONDEMNS HARRY POTTER FOR CORRUPTING CHILDREN



POETRY CORNER

In memoriam Lord King of Wartnaby, former chairman of British Airways

So. Farewell
Then Lord King of
Wartnaby.

You were Mrs Thatcher's
Favourite businessman.

Now you have passed
Through the Departure
Lounge and taken
Off into the
Heavens.

(Unless of course your
Flight has been
Delayed or even
Cancelled for
Operational reasons.)

E.J. Thribb (£17½ single to Miami, airport taxes included)

"This is nice – sun, sand, sea and sudoku"

TEN THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT HARRY POTTER

by Our Potter Mania Staff **Phil Pages**

1. 816,000,000 copies of the new novel are sold *every second.*

2. By lunchtime tomorrow everyone in the whole world will own at least two copies.

3. J.K. Rowling has made £94 billion this week – making her richer than the United States of America.

4. Dumbledore is an anagram of Leonardo da Vinci.

5. Harry Potter is a blood relative of Mary Magdalene through a long line of Merovingian wizards.

6. In the new novel a main character, Harry Potter, dies. He transmogrifies into Dr Who for the last instalment *Harry Potter and the Daleks.*

7. Ricky Gervais has been invited to write the next instalment of Harry Potter. J.K. Rowling is to appear in a new film of *The Office.*

8. Harry Potter's character was originally called Peregrine Worsthorne.

9. The K in J.K. Rowling stands for "Endeavour".

10. Over 8,000 billion stupid lists about Harry Potter have been published in the last five minutes. *(That's enough lists, Ed.)*

Pineapple-Chunks Gnome, age seven, gives us her exclusive view on the new Harry Potter

"I have not read the new Harry Potter book but my dad told me to make something up using the words 'magical', 'muggle', 'riveting' and 'complex narrative arc with deep moral undertones' – have I got that right, Dad?"

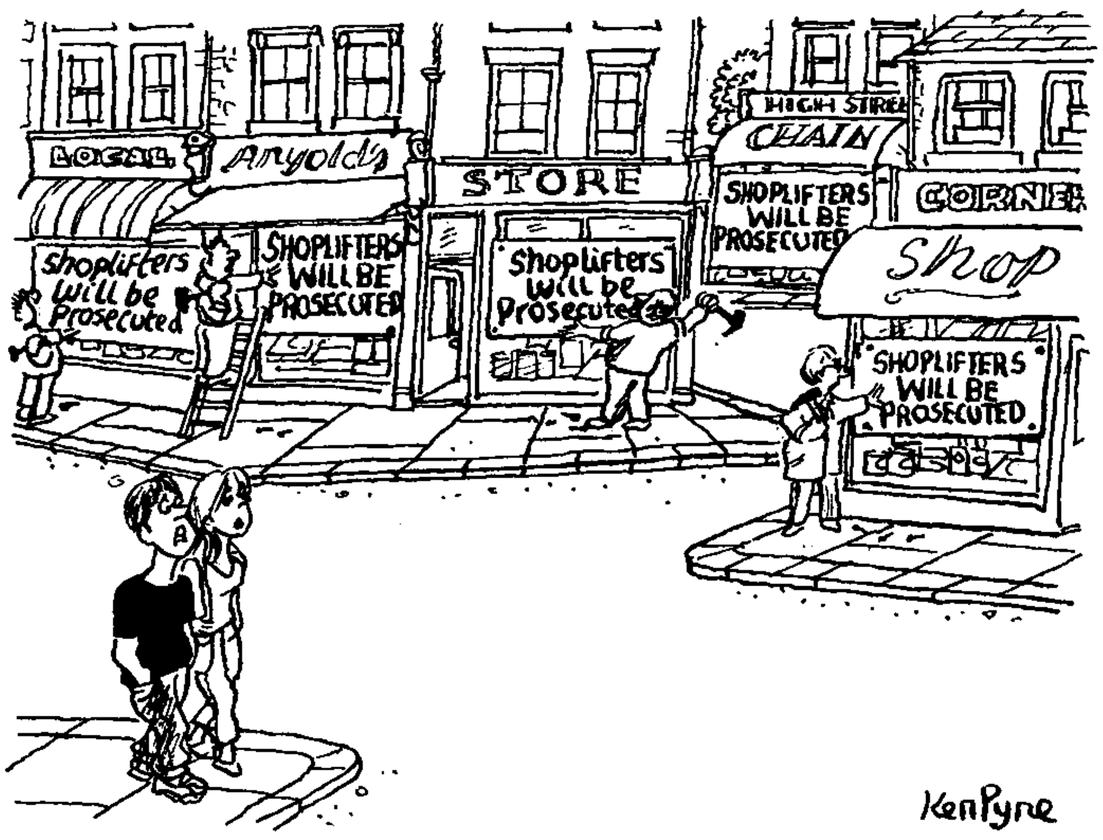
© Pineapple-Chunks Gnome 2005

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY TO STAGE SHAKESPEARE SHOCK

by Our Shakespeare Staff **Nicholas Shakespeare**

THE WORLD of theatre was stunned last night by the announcement from the country's leading producer of Shakespeare plays that it is planning to put on a lot of plays by the playwright William Shakespeare.

"This is amazing," said one theatre expert. "We were expecting them to put on the complete works of Ben Elton with music by the Bay City Rollers. Instead, the Royal Shakespeare Company has come up with this extraordinary idea of a season of Shakespeare plays, which is *(cont'd p. 94)*



"Good grief, is it the school holidays already?"

LEGOVER MAN SEIZES THRONE

by **Casin O'Booze**

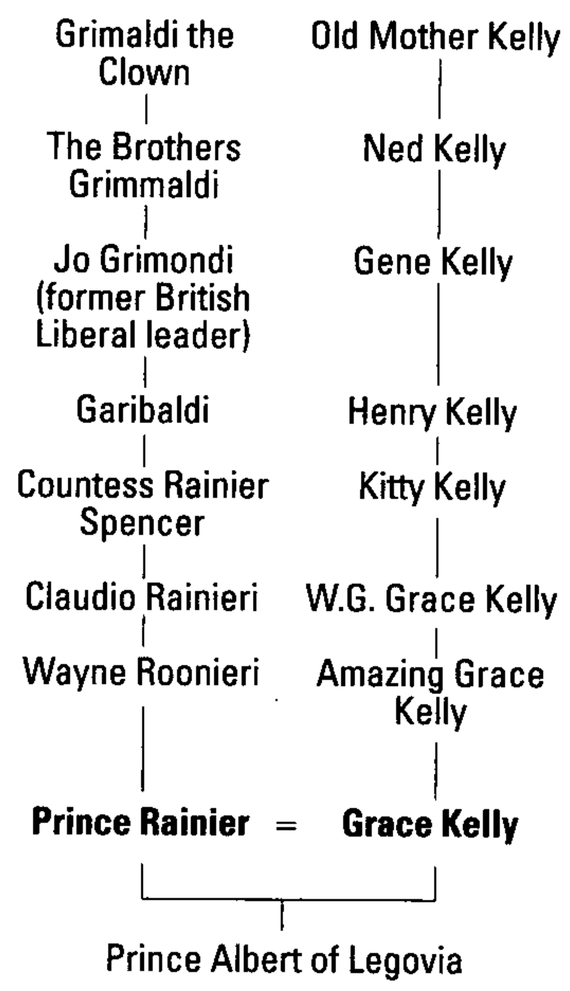
THE 25 inhabitants of tiny Monaco were rocked to their foundations yesterday by the news that the throne of their miniature 800-year-old Principality had been hijacked by a middle-aged sex fiend.

He is the 47-year-old Prince Albert of Legovia, best known for his thousands of love-children.

Monaco Grand Pricks

Said the unrepentant new monarch, "I have only done this to boost the population of my new kingdom to the point where we can have a referendum on the EU constitution."

How He Is Descended



Tonight At The Proms

8pm

- Overture *'The Giveaway'* by **Sir Michael Tip**
- Symphony No 83 *(the 'Fat Cat')* by **Edouard Greed**
- *'Dixit Bonus'* by **G.F. Handout**
- *'The Perks Ascending'* by **Sir Arnold Banx**

Performed by the BBC Orchestra of the Age of Enrichment.

TV Highlights

Who Wants To Be A BBC Manager?

NEW show where lucky contestants become Head of Paperclips at the BBC and scoop a prize of £300,000 by answering simple questions like "Will you accept a bonus even though you are making thousands of people redundant?". Says one contestant, Mark Glasses, "What a great idea. Whoever thought this up should be given a huge bonus. Oh yes – I have been."

Other questions include: "Did you know your bonus alone would fund Radio 4 for a year?" and "How many viewers have you lost this week, to the nearest million?".

Said BBC Chairman Michael Grade, "This new prize-winning format is a bit like The Weakest Link. Except in this version they are all weak, no one gets thrown out and they all win the money".

The Bishop of Dibley (BBC1, 9pm)

THE fun starts when Geraldine Granger is elevated to the episcopacy, bringing about a nationwide schism in the Anglican communion between traditionalist and reforming factions.

Don't miss the hilarious episode where church leaders try and force the Archbishop of Canterbury to resign!

And watch out for the usual hysterical joke at the close of the episode when Bishop Geraldine says to dopey Alice, "What has a male bishop got that I haven't?".

"A purple parsnip?" asks Alice.

"No," says Geraldine, "an unbroken line of apostolic succession through the early church and right back to the disciples."

Eye Rating: *Wholly* amusing!

DIARY

TOM CRUISE

You have a beautiful country, you know that? Beautiful towns, beautiful villages, beautiful people. Each time I visit your beautiful country, I feel honored and humbled.

Last time over, I was privileged to be presented to Elizabeth Her Majesty the Queen of England. She was good enough to ask me (me!) how I was. I told her I was deeply honored to be in her beautiful country, and look, I was a spiritual being, and so was she and – you know what? – so are we all. We each of us have our own story to tell.

Absolutely. Period. And I informed her that, by applying the right tools, we can seek to rise to our pre-activated level of knowingness. But first we must take responsibility for our own actions, right? So let's not fuck around with all that Freudian psychoanalysis blame-the-bullshit-on-your-parents bullshit, I said. I gave it to her straight. You're a communicator, I told her, so you get out there and communicate. But first you've gotta know what it is you're communicating. You gotta take responsibility. Okay?

So she goes, "That's awfully interesting," and smiles. But it's a hollow smile. Don't give me those hollow smiles, man. And you know what? It looks to me like she's about planning to make her move and walk away from me, further down the line, so I go, "Hey, listen, you got a problem with that? I don't have a problem with that, d'you have a problem with that? I was just courteous enough to inform you where I am, right here, right now – and I'd appreciate a reply. Put your manners back in. Okay?"

But she'd already gone, damnit. So I think to myself, that is one rude lady. Then I go, why does she hold the truth at bay like that? What is it that she FEARS? The lady needs help. I'll be there for her, 24/7. But you know what? She's first gotta kick the drugs, or her career will be, like, down to zero.

I'm in love! I'm in love! I can't contain it! I'm in love! I'm not going to hide it! Yes – I am in LOVE! It's just like, Huh? Wow, man. Wow! I got to tell you, Katie is the best part of my life. I love this woman. She is MAGNIFICENT! And she is a magnificent young actress, too. It's not so much the depth, they've all got depth. You know what? Katie has real surface.

What made me fall so deeply, so madly in love with Katie? I guess it was the way she looked at me with those eyes of hers – she has the ability to use both at the same time, simultaneously – and said, "Tom, you are the most incredible man. You are an inspiration and a dream come true. You are the most loving, the smartest, the most genuine and generous man the world has ever known. To love you, Tom, and to serve you in this world and be happy with you forever in the next – well, it would be such an honor for me, if only you would let me, Tom."

Yes, this woman was still young. But she had a wisdom beyond her years. She had intuited the very depths of my soul – and, yes, she had discovered the treasures buried deep within. So I'm thinking, man, you are so cool, so supportive. You know me as no other has ever known me before, so I shall take thee as mine wife.

So Katie is now a hugely important part not only of my life but more importantly of my whole career development trajectory. I sincerely want to give her the very best – hey, I love her! I love her! I love her! – so, first thing, I fix her up with a very, very skilled public relations-stroke-spiritual counsellor, Jessica Rodriguez. To my great joy, within minutes of the contract being signed, the two of them have become best friends, and now Katie doesn't want to go anywhere without Jessica. I tell you, she's in the safest hands. Not once – NOT ONCE – has Katie given an interview since I announced our engagement without telling the world about how she wishes to celebrate her love for me.

This leaves me with time to globally marketplace my new movie "The War of the Worlds", which is on target to be the top box-office grosser this summer-thru-fall.

Katie (I love her!) said that while I'm away she'd kinda like a pet to keep her company. What Katie wants, Katie gets, so I buy her a beautiful goldfish. Her eyes light up, and she tells me it's a privilege for her to be engaged to the kindest, most generous man in the world. She goes, what shall we call my new goldfish? So I go, like, to remind you of me when I'm away, Katie, how about Tom? And she says, "Like, Wow! Tom's a great name for my goldfish! You're so supportive, and it's such an honor to name my goldfish after such a hugely talented and deeply loving guy."

You know what? We both love that goldfish, we really do. And if you watch it with intensity as he swims with such skill around and around that bowl, you can see him mouthing one simple word, over and over again, almost like as if he's paying homage. And you know what that word he's saying is?

"Tom... Tom... Tom... Tom..."

Yes, he's a communicator. And what he has to communicate is – believe me – it's beautiful. With Jessica Rodriguez's diligent assistance in his Scientology program, he's already achieved the fourth level of thetan awareness. And it's becoming pretty clear to us all that, seventy five million years ago, he was the second son of the Chinese Emperor. And yes, that goldfish has taught me so much about our common humanity, and I plan to use that ancient wisdom to spiritually enrich my new 200m dollar movie, "Collateral Damage 2".

To me, life is an adventure, and an unending spiritual quest. There's people out there who need help. Yes, I want to understand what life's about, and revitalise my unique understanding of it by helping other people on a similar quest, so that together we may aspire to be 7th Level Operating Thetans, and thereby travel to new and ever widening astral planes, upon which we can find peace and goodwill. That's something I actively pursue. Do you have a problem with that? You do? You're stepping over a line here. Move back – now! What's your problem, jerk? So fuck you! Period.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS, PIXIE FROU FROU! I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...
YOU HAD SEX WITH SOME MAN IN A NIGHTCLUB AND IT WAS ALL CAPTURED ON CCTV..!
SHRUG
YOU'RE A DISGRACE YOUNG LADY, A COMPLETE AND UTTER DISGRACE!
CONGRATULATIONS! THE WORLD'S YOUR OYSTER!
WOULD YOU LIKE MUMMY TO PICK AN AGENT FOR YOU?

Literary Review

Whitless

Specimen Days
Michael Cunningham
(4th Estate, £14.99)

THERE are broadly two types of writer: the signature kind whose books repeat a particular style and subject and those who metaphorically disguise their handwriting. Among this year's big Brit Lit boys, for example, Ishiguro has pretty much published the same book for the sixth time under a different title while Monsieur Barnes has defied his reputation as a high-brow Francophile ice-man with a rather warm-hearted English detective yarn after Sherlock Holmes.

Michael Cunningham, a cult American writer who unexpectedly jumped into the mainstream with his last book, turns out to be a signature boy. The novel that made him bankable was *The Hours*, a tryptych of different tales stretching across 70 years – although all featuring women in trouble – and linked by the life and writing of Virginia Woolf (a character in the first section.)

Improbably for a guy who had been a minor gay writer, the work won the Pulitzer and Pen/Faulkner in the same year, then became the darling of English middle-class book group ladies and was turned into a movie with juicy roles for Nicole, Julianne and Meryl. As a result of this success, Cunningham could have done anything he wanted in his next book. Cunningham, though, hasn't really taken advantage of his licence for creative freedom. He's chosen to follow *The Hours* with a tryptych of different tales – each featuring a young boy, an older man and a woman – ranging across 300 years. Oh, and they're linked by the life and writing of a famous author: this time, the poet Walt Whitman.

This sort of anthology novel is all the rage at the moment. Anthony Burgess was considered a great experimentalist 20 years ago when *The End Of The World News* offered itself as a novel despite consisting of unlinked chunks of prose, TV script and opera libretto about Freud, Trotsky and outer space.

These days, though, it's only the real dinosaur authors who stick with one lot of characters from first page to last. David Mitchell almost took the Man Booker and scooped the Richard & Judy prize with *Cloud Atlas*, which offers alternating hunks of separate stories in different genres. Chuck Palahniuk's new one, *Haunted*, is a novel constructed from dozens of short stories and poems written by fictional characters we never meet.

So Cunningham is being relatively conventional by even bothering to use the anchoring device of Whitman's poetry – people in all three stories keep quoting Walt, mainly "I am large, I contain multitudes" – to keep older readers on board and ensure that the thing gets entered for the novel prizes. He's also careful to make sure that the same arrangement of characters is repeated in each scene and that there's an identifiable theme across the three. In *The Hours*, it was the social possibility of being an independent woman; here, it's society under threat from new elements.

He starts off with "In The Machine", a Victorian ghost story in which the coming of machines leads people to see and fear presences. Then we jump more than 100 years to join New York psychologists trying to deal with an apparently random group of terrorists who ring up to announce bizarre future atrocities about to happen in the city. Finally, we're in the middle of the 22nd century, with extra-terrestrial refugees fleeing to earth from another inhabited city.

This is all very elegantly post 9/11 and full of Cunningham's dinkily euphemistic sentences: a sick child is "rehearsing for the influenza that would make a picture of him a year later." But what you have here is three pleasant novellas. No matter how he lashes them together with Whitman-strapping, surely the novel juries and movie studios can't fall for it again.

Number Crunching

6
■ Hundred pages in new Harry Potter book
■ Broadsheet pages in *Daily Telegraph* devoted to it on Saturday, even though no one had yet read it

Books & Bookmen

■ HARRY POTTER fever is upon us once again, meaning that bookshops opened at midnight on the day of publication and ran all manner of child-friendly, fancy-dress-heavy events.

Superficially it seems like a jolly japе and a welcome bumper payday for the trade; but some on the shop floor are becoming disillusioned. A manager with one of the major chains tells the *Eye*: "We spend months thinking up bright ideas to promote one of the few books that needs absolutely no promotion whatsoever. We cancel all leave and open up in the middle of the night. Then we discover that Asda down the road is selling it for £8.96, and that everyone's gone there to buy it. I'm beginning to wonder why we bother at all".

Number Crunching

200,000
■ Number of words in new Harry Potter book

160,000
■ number of words in national newspapers about new Harry Potter book in last month

■ "CAN she sell any more?" asked *The Bookseller* on 24 June, noting that Lynne Truss's guide to grammar, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*, was to be reissued.

To demonstrate exactly why a new edition is necessary, the magazine went on to split an infinitive: "she can, and to help, this has sets of adhesive stickers to surreptitiously correct punctuation errors while out and about."

■ A NEW feature in the latest edition of the AA's *Road Atlas* is the inclusion of speed camera locations.

On the face of it, this seems irresponsible from an organisation that exists to make the roads a safer place; and bodies such as Transport 2000 have been quick to condemn the move. However, the decision is wholly consistent with the association's original aims.

When the founders met at the Trocadero restaurant in 1905, their main concern was helping motorists avoid police speed traps. However, with the roads now somewhat more crowded than 100 years ago, should the AA not have modified its stance slightly?

William Shakespeare

AD NAUSEAM

THE list of countries the world's local bank, HSBC, seems to have forgotten about grows weekly.

After Brazil and Bulgaria (*Eyes passim*), it now transpires that a financial minnow known as "Japan" is another territory where HSBC's much-touted global reach is not as extensive as advertised.

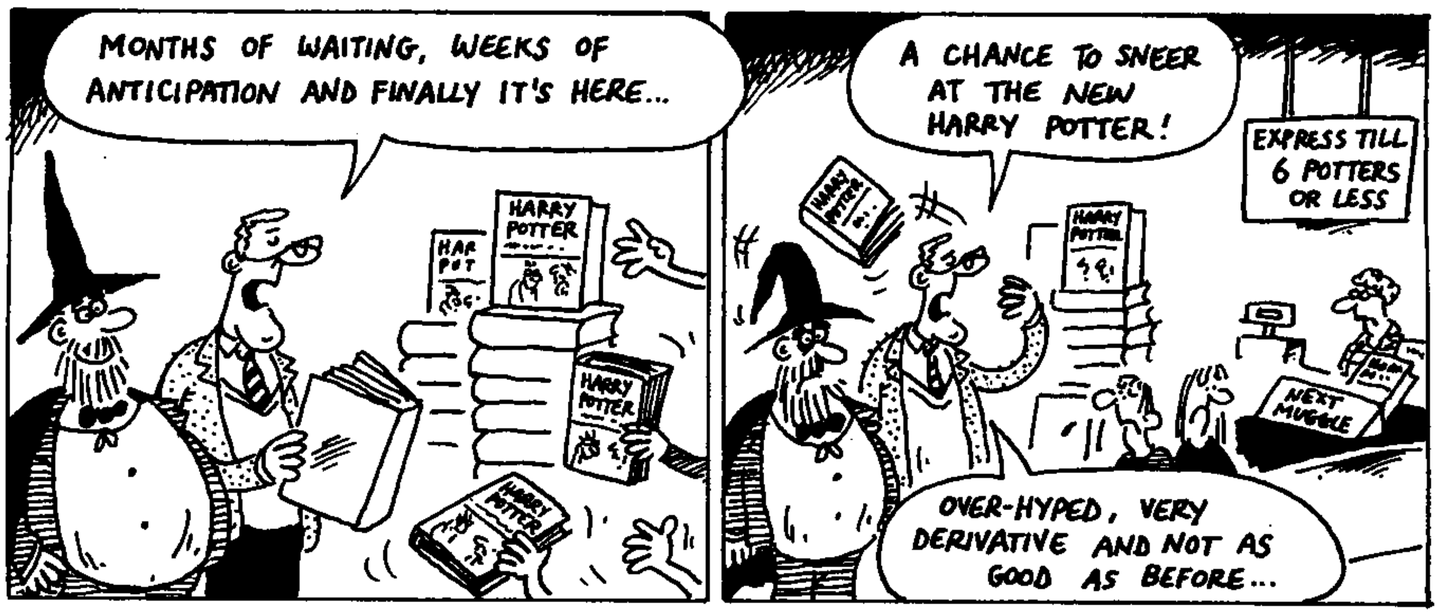
On moving to Tokyo, a reader reports that HSBC "hammered me with HSBC Offshore, mortgages and that it is the global retail bank." Only after a long chat about how the bank would take care of him via its Tokyo branch was it established that HSBC does not provide account services for individuals in the world's second largest economy. This is despite specific references to HSBC's Japanese know-how in several of its adverts, including a recent spot about expensive gifts for holes-in-one.

TRAVELEX wasn't the only brand to be undone by deciding to put its marketing budget behind the disastrous British and Irish Lions rugby tour to New Zealand (see last *Eye*).

Adidas, kit supplier to both teams, produced the usual high-profile TV spot to run throughout the six-week tour, featuring players from both sides engaged in a light-hearted game of British Bulldog. The climax of the ad showed opposing captains and star players, Brian O'Driscoll and Tana Umaga, the last men standing, running into a marauding melee made up of their team-mates.

Unfortunately, O'Driscoll was stretchered off after only one minute of the first international and missed the rest of the tour through injury. Worse, the man who was accused of illegally taking him out was Umaga. A hastily reworked ad was then aired featuring neither.

It didn't end there. Joe Rokocoko, who took Umaga's place on the New Zealand side for the revised broadcast, didn't even feature in a game.


MONTHS OF WAITING, WEEKS OF ANTICIPATION AND FINALLY IT'S HERE...
HARRY POTTER
HARRY POTTER
A CHANCE TO SNEER AT THE NEW HARRY POTTER!
EXPRESS TILL 6 POTTERS OR LESS
NEXT MUGGLE
OVER-HYPED, VERY DERIVATIVE AND NOT AS GOOD AS BEFORE...

Pseuds Corner

The net still lay between the couple like the sword of Tristan and Iseult...

SIMON BARNES
The Times

The sheer courage of these pieces is breathtaking. The space inside, the gap between the walls, narrows, widens, breathes in and out (if you can speak of massive iron "breathing", which in Serra's work you can) and eventually rewards you with an inner chamber, from which you have to follow the same route out...each emphasizes the ancient Greek philosopher's Zen-like adage: hodos ano kato mia kai hote, "the way up and the way down are one and the same". A maze would be fussy; it would interfere with the stupendous directness and logic of Serra's spatial language.

ROBERT HUGHES on the Richard Serra installation at the Bilbao Guggenheim,
Guardian

Eating is not a random act of chance. Every plate has a plan, a rhythm learnt over a lifetime. You meander back and forth, make decisions about this bit, that morsel. Eating is like composing a small personal fugue.

A.A. GILL
Sunday Times

She [Julie Burchill] accused me of being a "misogynist" and convinced herself that I was using the Modern Review as a vehicle to seduce vulnerable young women. I was completely baffled by these allegations... It was eerily reminiscent of the kind of trumped-up charges that preceded one of Stalin's purges.

TOBY YOUNG
Guardian

Pseuds Council

The wholly immersive urbanism that is a place that is distinctly built environment and seeks to create compact walkable neighbourhoods all connected and interrelated in a complex pattern of urban form and function.

The Ashford Borough Council Local Development Framework's definition of 'a town'

Contributors: David Laffin, Simon Fisher, Gregory Bailey, Dominic Tobin, J. Taylor, John Weston, Hazel Dawe

£10 paid for all entries

11.50 Arts Report
The Pedant's Revolt: Meets the champions of grammar, determined improve written English. (S) *207933*

TV Choice

IN THE BACK

G8: MAKING POVERTY HISTORY

A bit rich

PERHAPS the keenest business mogul to associate himself with the "make poverty history" campaign was Sir Richard Branson (pictured right). Laying on trains, posing with Saint Bob and signing statements of support in the papers aren't just high profile gestures – they are also conveniently low-cost.

The only time Beardie's company, Virgin, became exercised about money was when chancellor Gordon Brown hinted that he would use existing passenger duty to fund increased aid for Africa, shunning any increase in air fuel duty. A relieved Virgin spokesman declared: "There was no logical reason to us why this industry rather than any other should be used as a source of money to provide aid to Africa", before adding hastily "much needed as that aid may be".

Ahead of the G8 event Branson joined several other captains of industry whose names were superimposed on a map of Africa above a statement in most broadsheets calling for an end to poverty. Among his co-signatories were Philip Green, Richard Desmond and Elisabeth Murdoch, all of whom like Branson have fortunes stashed furtively in the world's tax havens. Oxfam estimates that tax havens cost the developing world at least $50bn a year, six times what would be needed to provide universal primary education.

First prize among the signatories for hypocrisy in affecting concern for the world's poor must, however, go to Jan du Plessis, chairman of British American Tobacco. His company quite openly views the developing world as its best hope for selling its deadly product and last week ended production in the UK in order to get around a European ban on making the more carcinogenic fags that go down so well in poorer countries.

Sir Richard also waxed lyrical on the power of commerce at a UN-sponsored conference entitled "Bending the Arc" during G8 week. "A thriving private sector is the engine for growth of any economy creating employment, stimulating economic activity and generating tax revenues," he told the audience with great authority. For some reason he failed to mention that on his favoured method of making money – selling businesses at great profits – he pays no tax as he does it all through tax haven companies and trusts.

Meanwhile, British Airways chairman Martin Broughton chose the pages of the *Observer* to campaign against greater taxes on air transport in the fight against global warming, claiming that although they would increase prices, demand for flights would be unaffected.

Broughton, of course, as head of British American Tobacco until last year, displayed a similarly unorthodox approach to economic theory by claiming for years that banning fag advertising did nothing for overall levels of smoking. Now, as then, critics might respond: why are you so bothered then?

BRIBERY & CORRUPTION

Welcome to Britain

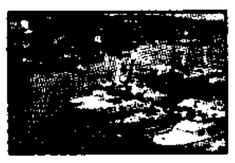
THE stern condemnation of bribery and corruption in the developing world from Tony Blair and fellow G8 leaders came in a remarkably good year for bent businesses looking to earn money from British taxpayers.

Last month the treasury's office of government commerce implemented the European public procurement directive in the most corruption-friendly manner possible. Companies will *not* be barred from public contracts in Britain (unlike in other countries) if they have a conviction for fraud, bribery or money laundering as long as the government believes there are "overriding requirements in the general interest" to justify giving them business.

The let-out could prove useful for companies like US giant Halliburton, a regular winner of ministry of defence contracts that remains under investigation for paying multi-million pound bribes to win a gas contract in Nigeria and for massively over-charging for work in post-war Iraq.

The procurement decision comes soon after the government cravenly surrendered to lobbying from British exporters BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce against rules requiring applicants for export credit guarantees (from the taxpayer) to attest that they and their associates were not involved in any bribery. Only after campaigning group The Corner House forced a judicial review of then trade secretary Patricia Hewitt's decision to water down the rules without consultation was the government humiliatingly forced to reopen the debate.

Now anti-corruption campaigners are hoping to persuade new trade secretary Alan Johnson to reverse Hewitt's softening of the rules, holding the government to the commitment in the Gleneagles communique to "reduce bribery by... strengthening anti-bribery requirements for those applying for export credits and credit guarantees".



ENVIRONMENT

Crying Fal

FALMOUTH harbourmaster Captain Mark Sansom got in a lather when he read the story in *Eye* 1134 about environmental concerns over plans to allow ship-to-ship transfers of crude oil in Falmouth Bay.

It was outrageous to suggest, he claimed in a press release sent to Cornish newspapers, that there could be any conflict of interest involved in his combining the roles of harbourmaster, chief executive of Falmouth harbour commissioners (FHC) and a directorship of Triskel Marine, a company that could benefit from contracts to clear up oil spills.

The press release also says "no decision has been made on permitting ship-to-ship transfers in Falmouth Bay". It is pretty clear, however, where Sansom and his fellow harbour commissioners stand. In April the "This is Cornwall" website reported under the heading "Oil cargo transfers could benefit port" that "Harbourmaster Capt Mark Sansom has outlined the advantages in a letter to Falmouth Town Council".

PS: The FHC already has form for profiting from damaging the Fal and riding roughshod over legislation to protect it. Until January this year, FHC licensed the commercial dredging of maerl sand from the Fal. Maerl is a rare coral-like seaweed and one of the main reasons the Fal was granted special area of conservation (SAC) status. Maerl grows less than 1mm per year and provides important habitat for many species. For an annual fee of several thousand pounds, FHC licensed the dredging of 30,000 tonnes of maerl sand per year from the estuary. English Nature spent several years attempting to stop this. The maerl was sold to farmers as fertiliser, which, according to one environmentalist, is "about as sustainable as spreading minced-up panda bears on the fields".

ID CONSULTANTS

The card sharks

THE identity card bill has yet to receive its third reading, but consultants working on the scheme at the home office already outnumber civil servants and have so far racked up fees of £17m.

The figures come courtesy of *Management Consultancy* magazine and the freedom of information act. They show that in the home office's identity card office there are 62 consultants on an average fee of £1,093 a day working with 43 civil servants. So far the bulk of the fees, some £12m, have gone to PA Consulting, whose executive chairman Jon Moynihan (a Tory donor, as it happens), has worked with the home office before.

The consultants are being paid to help the home office choose suppliers for the ID card scheme – the same role PA Consulting played to great effect in the criminal records bureau (CRB) fiasco.

When the home office was examining bids from suppliers for that scheme, Capita was offering a much cheaper deal than any rival and PA Consulting was asked to evaluate the bid and identify why it was so much cheaper.

According to the national audit office (NAO), PA Consulting offered "assurances" that there was nothing wrong with Capita's bid, and as a result Capita won through. PA Consulting also supported the decision to launch the CRB scheme in March 2002 even though the IT system "did not yet have full functionality" – ie it wasn't working.

As history has shown, both decisions were disastrous. Who better now for the home office to tap for expensive advice on ID cards than PA Consulting?

Closed for business

ATOS Origin, which is doing substantial work on Britain's ID card scheme (see *Eye* 1135), is causing havoc in other areas of government business.

In March it won a £500m, seven-year government deal to run medical assessments for incapacity benefit and other payments to the disabled. Xavier Flinois, the £790,000-a-year boss of ATOS UK, promised many improvements and to "extend the telephone booking system, so that customers may choose the time and location of their medical assessment".

However, last month ATOS announced its intention to close all medical assessment centres in Derbyshire, where disabled people will have to travel to Sheffield, Nottingham, Mansfield or Manchester to be assessed. ATOS has promised to pay for taxis where necessary, but claimants will still have to come up with the fares – £50 from Derby to Nottingham – up front.

According to ATOS's contract, claimants should not have to travel more than 90 minutes to appointments. But this safeguard seems to have been jettisoned with ATOS's desire to close a total of 21 out of 50 medical centres across Britain.

The proposed closures are on hold while the minister for disabled people, Anne McGuire, speaks to local MPs, 39 of whom have signed an early-day motion condemning the closures.

PS: ATOS is also causing problems for farmers thanks to its work for the department for environment, food and rural affairs' (Defra) running the "Genesis" database.

MISCARRIAGES OF JUSTICE

Third time lucky

ONE piece of Commons business lost as a result of the disruption caused by the London bombings was an adjournment debate which would have revealed more concerns about the conviction of Susan May (pictured below) for murdering her aunt, Hilda Marchbank, in 1992.

Michael Meacher, backed by more than 100 MPs, was due to ask the home secretary to intervene on Mrs May's behalf. No one but a handful of people in the criminal justice system (which has rejected her two appeals) now believes Mrs May is guilty.

Mr Meacher would have reminded the Commons that Mrs May, a caring mother and grandmother of 60, had been Mrs Marchbank's devoted niece and carer. It was a distraught Mrs May who discovered her aunt's body, battered and suffocated and with her nightclothes pulled up, when she went to make her morning call at her aunt's house.

The place appeared to have been ransacked; but despite a wealth of evidence pointing to an intruder, the prosecution concentrated on three stains on a wall next to Mrs Marchbank's bed, including one which was Mrs Marchbank's blood and another which may not have been blood but which had Susan May's fingerprint in it.

Three forensic experts were involved; and as Mr Meacher would have told the Commons: "Subsequent evidence that has come to light has cast considerable doubt on the evidence they gave at the time."

There are many other serious doubts over when and how the stains arrived on the wall; and there is also the question of the mysterious red car, seen parked outside the house on the night of the murder at around 12.45pm.

Two separate witnesses saw the car, but the defence was told at the time that it was never found. Mr Meacher was planning to tell the Commons that since Mrs May's second appeal, it has emerged that the police *did* locate a car fitting the description. It belonged to the sister of a violent burglar, Michael Rawlinson, who had been drawn to the attention of the police as having been involved in this murder by two separate people who knew him.

Rawlinson's sister had sold the car within three days of the murder. But forensic evidence taken from it was never processed and Rawlinson was himself killed five years ago.

In addition there were fibres found on Mrs Marchbank's hand which were never matched to Mrs Marchbank or her niece; there was a paper bag containing meat scraps which tested positive for blood, but fingerprints on the bag were not tested; and there were unidentified footprints and fingerprints at the scene.

Mr Meacher was planning to tell the Commons that the case was dogged by a "sloppy" or "mischievous" forensic process.

Meanwhile Mrs May, who was released from jail on parole in April while the CCRC again re-examines her case, is quietly hopeful the issues raised by Mr Meacher may finally prove her innocence.

FORENSIC EXPERTS

Credible witness?

JIM BATES, a forensic computer expert who has given evidence in some of the country's most sensitive trials, including Operation Ore, is himself being investigated by police because of concerns over his professional qualifications and credibility.

Until a few days ago, anyone searching for a computer expert via the UK Register of Experts or the Institution of Analysts and Programmers (of which Mr Bates is president) would have found a profile of him citing his BSc (Eng) qualification. But Jim Bates has no such degree.

Mr Bates (pictured below) is the latest forensic expert to have been caught out for misleading people over fake qualifications. Earlier this month the crown prosecution service (CPS) ordered a review of all court cases which had heard evidence from Jessica Rees, a lip-reading expert, after it emerged that instead of gaining a BA in English at Balliol College, Oxford, she had not completed the course.

Jim Bates did not go to university at all; but he told the *Eye* he believed he was entitled to suggest he had a BSc because in 1965 he obtained a qualification from the Association of Electronic Engineers in Leicester and it had sent him a letter saying this was equivalent to a BSc. He said he could not reproduce the letter because it had got lost in a house move.

The only Association of Electronic Engineers the *Eye* can trace is in Hong Kong and there is no evidence that the *Eye* – or Mr Bates – can find to prove that it ever existed anywhere in the UK, let alone Leicester.

Mr Bates' lack of qualifications was raised during a trial in Croydon last year; but it has not yet led to any review of court cases with which he has been connected. Bates said the judge was satisfied the issue did not affect his ability to give factual expert evidence. A CPS spokeswoman said the CPS would consider any material presented to it, but at the moment it did not have anything that caused it "concern about his competence". That may change if Inspector Knacker presents a dossier.

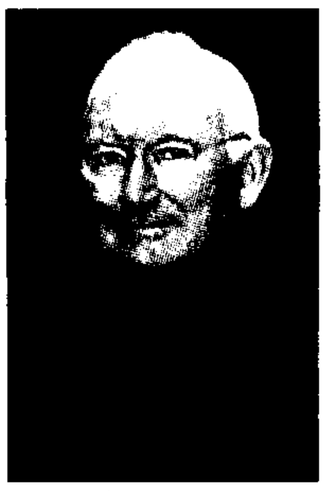
Mr Bates told the *Eye* that although he mistakenly believed he was entitled to the qualification, he had not actually used it for court work or in CVs – contrary to documents seen by the *Eye* – and claimed that people were out to "pillory him". He pursued a similar theme on his website earlier this month. "Recent events have produced some mud-slinging concerning non-existent academic qualifications. For the record I do not have a university degree and I have never attended a university as a student. The only post nominals (sic) that I use are FIAP (CMPN). That means fellow of the Institute of Analysts and Programmers and I was elected to this in December 1997."

Meanwhile, *Eye* readers may recall that Mr Bates is no stranger to mud slinging himself. When the child porn case against DC Brian Stevens, liaison officer in the Soham murders, collapsed because a prosecution expert had made mistakes in his analysis of the detective's laptop, Bates bayed for blood. He called for an inquiry into all the other cases carried out by Brian Underhill, a former policeman, and said: "Any solicitor worth their salt will be looking to see if they can get their case thrown out simply because he is listed as an expert witness. And who can blame them?"

Who now can blame anyone for looking at cases in which Mr Bates has been involved?

MAN IN THE EYE: LORD BIRT

Pie in the blue sky



IT'S official: the role of the prime minister's unpaid "strategy adviser" Lord Birt (pictured right) within number 10 is nobody's business but Tony's. And if anybody dares to question that, they're likely to be branded a bit of a nutter by the cabinet office.

When Lib Dem spokesman Norman Baker asked cabinet minister John Hutton for a statement about Birt's current responsibilities, he was fobbed off with the reply that, as well as sitting on the cabinet office strategy and civil service reform boards, Birt provides "advice on a wide range of issues".

Baker thanked Hutton for a "content-free" answer and again demanded to know what the former chief Dalek was up to, prompting the minister to hint at the paranoia surrounding Birt's presence inside No 10. "He should have seen the first [answer] that I was given to read out," declared Hutton, before dismissing the whole issue as "a matter for the prime minister, not the hon. gentleman, who of course is president of the obsessive conspiracy theorists' club".

Five days later the cabinet was forced to publish Birt's initial letter of engagement from 2001, outlining the reviews he was to perform on transport, education, drugs and crime; and the support he would receive from civil servants – clearly matters only an obsessive conspiracy theorist could be interested in.

The letter also stressed to Birt the importance of keeping all his work secret and avoiding any suspicion of conflicts of interest. Despite this Birt remained a £100,000 a year adviser to McKinsey while being highly influential in the reform of the very civil service that recently saw a McKinsey consultant appointed to head the PM's delivery unit.

Last week, a fortnight after this exchange and a mere four years after Birt's original appointment to No 10, McKinsey announced that he was to end his association with the firm "to avoid any potential misunderstanding about Lord Birt's role… though in fact no conflict ever arose".

Peerless prose

SO HOW incisive *is* Lord Birt's thinking? To judge by his report *Reducing Crime – a new vision for the criminal justice system*, which was published on the day of the Olympic bid decision when no one would notice, the answer is: not very at all.

Indeed, according to one expert who has seen it, the report itself is a crime – "worse than the scribblings of a second-rate undergraduate".

Little more than a collection of graphs, pie charts and tables presented as fact, data are not always sourced and are often accompanied by the sort of Birtspeak nonsense for which the author is famous. Thus he presents a "victim universe" curiously separated from an "offender universe", untroubled by analysis, discussion or explanation.

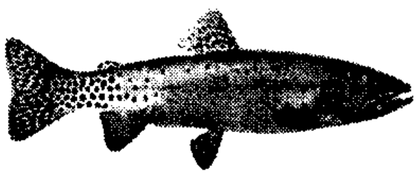
The report is also partly an idiot's guide. For instance, a big graphic shows that for a crime to be committed three factors have to collide: a motivated offender, an available property or victim and an absence of security or guardianship. (As the London bombings demonstrated, crime also happens under our noses, despite our best efforts at security). Organised crime, Birt believes, happens when three or more people, motivated by profit or power, commit serious criminal offences over a prolonged period. Well who'd have thought it?

The report also cobbles together a number of Birtist pet theories that wouldn't sound out of place at the end of a suburban dinner party. He pastes a variety of graphs – recorded crime and the British Crime Survey – showing an "inexorable" upward trends until the 1990s (without any of the usual health warnings about their reliability). And then he plots on to the graphs potential causes – the end of national service in the 1950s; the upswing in divorce and drugs in the 1960s; even the abolition of apprenticeships. "We can speculate, but we cannot be certain which factors caused the massive increase in crime in the second half of the 20th century," he says.

Although the public is forbidden under the freedom of (no) information act from seeing the recommendations that have sprung from Birt's report, there are signs that the report impressed Tony Blair and his home office ministers. Parts of the government's white paper, *Criminal Justice, the Way Ahead*, echo Birt's focus on a hard core of 100,000 persistent offenders – figures and theory that were comprehensively debunked in a detailed review by Richard Garside, director of the independent think-tank, the Crime and Society Foundation.

One piece of Birtism the home office has ignored, however, is his alarming (although not necessarily too wide of the mark) estimate of the real levels of indictable offences in Britain. At 130 million, the figure is 10 times the rate suggested in the British Crime Survey and 20 times higher than police-recorded crime levels.

And Lord Birt's view of the future? He concludes that if unchecked, crime might go up… or it might go down. *Brilliant!*



POLLUTION

Costing a Mint

WHILE the courts and Environment Agency continue to prosecute fishermen caught hooking the odd salmon or trout without a rod licence, a different set of rules applies to some of those who do far more damage to Wales' wildlife.

Fines totalling around £500 were recently handed out by Chester magistrates to six anglers caught by sharp-eyed EA Wales officers on the north Wales borders. But when some 6,000 fish (including 1,500 salmon and 650 trout) were killed after chlorine leaked into the River Ely from the Royal Mint at Llantrisant, South Wales, the company was let off the hook:

The Royal Mint (not short of a bob or two, presumably) polluted a 2km stretch of the river at Ynysmaerdy in May. But while the Mint has agreed to meet the EA's costs for the investigation and re-stocking of the watercourse, it escapes prosecution because the site has crown immunity.

This isn't the first time the Mint has ducked prosecution for pollution. In 1998 a leak of sulphuric acid, used for cleaning coin blanks, killed 1,400 fish, mainly trout. Cynics might think that immunity from prosecution reduces the motivation to clean up their act.

FOLLOW-UPS… FOLLOW-UPS…

■ **ISARD HOUSE:** Bromley council's report on the "successful transfer" of six of its care homes from Bupa to Shaw Healthcare made very interesting reading.

The homes included Isard House, where seven whistle-blowers lost their jobs after making allegations of abuse, drugging and ill-treatment of elderly residents.

The council report said: "Shaw Healthcare has dealt robustly with incidents of poor quality care, which it inherited on the date the home transferred." Moreover, one of the major areas of concerns – the large number of admissions to hospital of elderly people through falls and ill health – had "significantly reduced".

This is finally good news for the residents, as it was as long ago as 1999 that the Bupa whistlebowers lost their jobs. Ever since they have had to fight tooth and nail to get the council and Bupa to act on their claims. The council finally put the contract out to tender in February this year.

Bupa, however, remains in denial. Spokesman Oliver Thomas said: "We strongly refute any suggestion that the new provider inherited poor quality care. We enjoyed a successful partnership running care homes on behalf of Bromley council for eight years and both them and the regulators were satisfied with the care we provided."

■ **SUSSEX DOWNS:** Campaigners fighting the Sussex Downs Conservation Board (SDCB) over the massive wall of chalk, rubble and metal pipes put up alongside an ancient downland track on Telscombe Tye – supposedly in the name of conservation – have scored a victory.

East Sussex county council has demanded that the "bunds" – supposedly small banks built on either side of the track to keep vehicles off the grasslands and deter joy-riders, travellers and fly-tippers – be removed and the downland restored to its former beauty.

The bunding – 5ft at its highest and 15ft at its widest – cut an ugly swathe across a vast area of outstanding natural beauty and had been built without planning permission and without consent for the use of imported waste. Although the SDCB, acting as agent for Telscombe town council, had expected the bunding to be built with reclaimed chalk, it concealed a large amount of fly-tipping.

CLIVEDEN DEVELOPMENT

Astor la vista

THE National Trust's plans for 191 homes on its land at the former Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital Cliveden in Buckinghamshire (*Eyes passim*), rejected by planners last year, are about to rear their ugly head again.

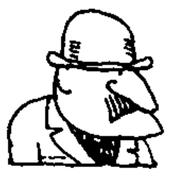
A public inquiry is due to start in early August, which could chuck out the decision of South Bucks councillors to reject an "unsustainable, car dependent development in an isolated rural location". However, to confuse matters further, the National Trust has submitted a new application for 170 unrestricted open-market houses to be priced at £650,000 upwards.

While the old plans involved 42 lower priced key worker apartments, the new scheme provides no affordable property at Cliveden, although there would be a contribution to South Bucks towards the building of affordable homes elsewhere. That application should be considered at this month's planning meeting, just before the inquiry is due.

If the prospect of going through the whole process all over again isn't enough to browbeat South Bucks into accepting one plan or another, the councillor representing Taplow, the parish which has raised so many objections to the development, has been told by officers not to attend planning committee because of his "already declared views on the application".

The trust's accomplice in this scheme is the *Eye*'s favourite property developer, Countryside Properties (recently noted for its attempts to deny that a former factory site in Rochdale was contaminated with asbestos and to build on land containing unexploded bombs). It should feel at home on the former hospital site at Cliveden. Since it was abandoned by the NHS in 1986 it has been allowed to become derelict and vandalised. It is also contaminated with, surprise, surprise, asbestos from the hospital buildings.

Viscount Astor handed over the Cliveden estate to the trust in 1942 saying: "I have given up on my behalf and on behalf of future owners the right of converting it into a speculators building estate."



In the City

"If fanaticism is the heart of modern terror, finance is its lifeblood."

"There is no hiding place for those who finance terror. Across Europe we will act as one to send a message on terrorism by taking steps to thwart those funding it."

THESE are the words of chancellor Gordon Brown a year after 11 September and a few days after the London bombings when he was keen to lecture others from his Brussels bully pulpit when meeting fellow EU finance ministers. But the rhetoric sounds much grander than the facts. These suggest that little or no impact has been made on curbing (never mind stopping) the money flows that finance terrorism whether in London, Madrid, Bali, Russia, Israel or Iraq.

The Bank of England, acting as the treasury's agent, has an ever-lengthening list of individuals and organisations whose bank accounts and assets are frozen – once located – and for whom banks and financial institutions are banned from acting. This list mirrors a similar EU list, as well as those banned by the US and subject to UN sanctions.

Some 325 individuals and 118 banks, charities and organisations are directly linked to al-Qaeda and the ousted Taliban regime in Afghanistan, as well as other Islamic fundamentalist terrorists plus Chechen separatists. Then there are up to another 60 individuals and 56 international terrorist groups and associates, including the Real and Continuity IRA and the UDA/LVF from Northern Ireland, as well as ETA from Spain, Columbia's FARC and the Kurdish PKK.

So how much terrorist funding has been frozen in the UK linked to those on the treasury list? A not so staggering £378,000 in 45 accounts, according to the last estimate provided to parliament in March this year. All but £31,000 of which has been frozen since 11 September. The UN estimated last year that $136m had been frozen around the world since 9/11.

Just how much if any of the £378,000 relates to al-Qaeda is not revealed by the treasury: perhaps not surprising as, given the Irish element to the list, the suspicion is an even less impressive number.

Clearly it is much easier to put names on a list than to find and freeze assets. Announcements that the treasury has frozen a named terrorist or organisation's bank accounts does not mean that any money or assets, such as shares or property, have been frozen. Indeed, comparing the long list of names with the contents of the 45 accounts suggest that in most if not all cases the announcements are for political and PR purposes to show that Britain is taking strong action, even if the action is form not substance.

In the wake of the 2001 attacks it was trumpeted that Britain had frozen £70m belonging to the Taliban. But that represented assets of the previous Afghanistan government and was returned to the present pro-western regime after 2002.

Given the murderous mayhem that terrorists have continued to wreak around the world since 2001, culminating in the four London bombs, it is clear that these treasury measures like the ponderous anti-money laundering regulations, which are also supposed to prevent terrorists opening and using bank accounts, have little effect.

Jonathan Stevenson, of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, warned the Commons foreign affairs committee in 2003 that local members of the al-Qaeda franchise simply do not use conventional financing channels because they do not need them and they were too high risk. They rely instead on less formal means of finance – such as the traditional hawalla networks – that move money to and from the Middle East, Africa and the Indian sub-continent and which are very difficult to regulate.

Furthermore, despite a CIA estimate of al-Qaeda's running costs of $30m a year, neither the New York/Washington or London attacks required the sort of sums that would register on the regulatory radar. In the US the greatest expense was probably flying lessons and then the one-way fares; in London the ingredients for the home-made bombs. Costs measured more in hundreds than thousands. And for these, international transfers or even bank accounts may not be necessary.

US banking regulators have for months been conducting investigations into transactions by the New York branch of the Arab Bank involving Palestinian charities and other related clients.

The Jordan-based but Palestinian-owned bank has a dominant role in the West Bank and Gaza. It has also been accused of handling funds for Palestinian militants at its Paris and Zurich branches in a US legal action brought by victims of terrorism.

Arab Bank denies any wrongdoing but is expected to seek a settlement with US regulators over possible reporting infractions regarding what could be classed as suspicious transactions. Settlements over non-reporting of suspicious activity were quietly reached last year with US regulators by Standard Chartered and ABN-Amro who agreed to improve controls and close accounts. Which raises the question as to what if any similar regulatory activity may be taking place in London regarding Arab Bank?

AS IF the embarrassment of the Richard Chang inquest this week were not enough, corporate investigators Kroll Associates, taken over last year by scandal-plagued US insurance brokers Marsh & McLennan, face further and potentially greater problems in Brazil as a result of its involvement in a corporate struggle over control of Brasil Telecom.

Kroll was hired by BT in association with Brazilian banker Daniel Dantas to probe the activities of Telecom Italia. The Kroll offices were raided by the Brazilian police last October as part of an investigation codenamed Operation Jackal. Documents published in Brazil have resulted in accusations of industrial espionage, surveillance, telephone tapping, bribery, obtaining bank records, conspiracy and invasion of privacy. All things Kroll insists publicly it never does – although it may know those who do.

The row has a major political dimension because two of those apparently targeted are the present communications minister and the head of the central bank. Citigroup, which has had its own share of recent scandals, has also been dragged in because Dantas managed a private equity fund that invested in BT. Citigroup apparently received Kroll intelligence reports.

Kroll has steadfastly denied any illegal actions but the police have filed charges against several Kroll executives and operatives, as well as Dantas and the BT president. The former Kroll president in Brazil, Eduardo Sampaio, who left the country before the raids and is coincidentally now employed by Marsh in Australia, is among those charged. Also named by the police are Britons Charles Carr, who heads Kroll's operations in Italy, and long-time London sub-contractor William Goodall who left Brazil just ahead of the police. All the charges, however, need to be confirmed by the courts which could take years.

REPORTS from Romania cast doubt on the claim made by Regal Petroleum that it spent $53m last year in Greece drilling for oil that was not there.

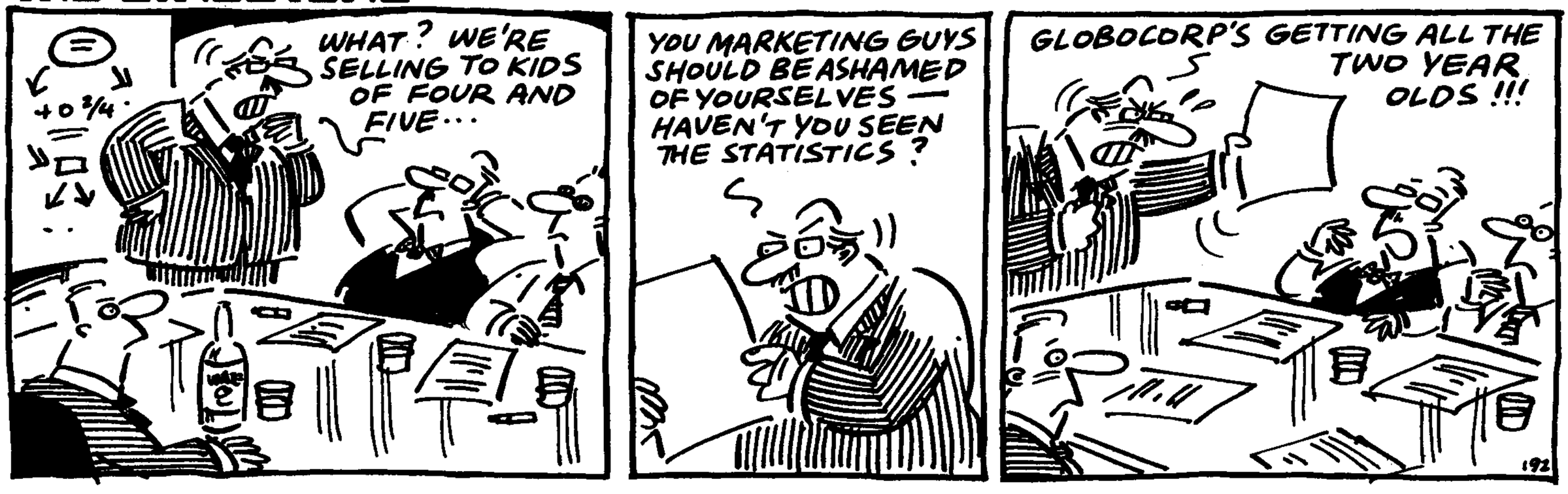
The offshore exploration was carried out by a Romanian company Upetrom. However, Upetrom says it was only paid $12m by Regal. Which raises questions about how the other $41m was spent. No doubt questions former chairman Frank Timis will be able to answer.

NADHMI AUCHI, whose boardroom colleagues have included Lords Steel and Lamont and who also has prominent Labour friends, has not had the best of luck in court.

He lost his appeal against sentence in Paris for his role in the corruption scandal surrounding the French oil group Elf. Auchi was convicted in November 2003 of accepting commissions on the sale of a Spanish oil refinery and kicking back part of the payments. He was originally given a suspended 15 months jail sentence and fined 2m euros (roughly £1.5m). However, at least the fine was reduced to 1.5m euros.

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG

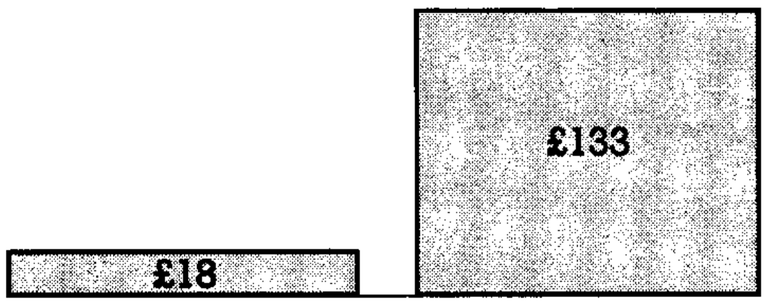

+0 3/4
WHAT? WE'RE SELLING TO KIDS OF FOUR AND FIVE...
YOU MARKETING GUYS SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELVES — HAVEN'T YOU SEEN THE STATISTICS?
GLOBOCORP'S GETTING ALL THE TWO YEAR OLDS !!!
192

Stock Horror

by 'Bruin'

Dr Dixey's Miracle Cure for Wealth

Value of £100 invested 5 years ago in...



...Richard Dixey's "organic medicine" venture **Phytopharm**

...in other mid-sized companies over the same period

MORE than four years have now passed since Independent Insurance collapsed without a decision by the Serious Farce Office as to whether to prosecute founder Michael Bright and at least one of his co-directors.

The investigation began soon after Independent crashed in June 2001. For months now SFO insiders have been talking about how difficult such a prosecution might be given the complexity of insurance matters in general and Independent in particular. No major insurance case has ever been successfully prosecuted by the SFO. A decision has been expected for some weeks and last month there was a flurry of activity.

It may be difficult to justify dropping the case after four years of investigation which is no doubt why a decision has been so slow in coming. But it would not be surprising given the passage of time if a decision were made not to prosecute. Especially as the delay could well make an abuse of process play hard to resist. So a choice of humiliation now or later. However, one way or another it is time the SFO declared its intentions not just on Independent but also on Equitable Life where it has been mulling how to say "no" to an investigation ever since the Penrose Report in March last year.

DESPITE the legal justification (Equitable's "hopeless case"), Ernst & Young's remarkable decision not to call any of the Equitable Life auditors to give evidence in defence of the £2bn negligence claim suggests they have little confidence in what could emerge under cross-examination of those who year after year agreed there was no looming black hole in the Equitable accounts. But given that E&Y and lead auditor Paul McNamara are already in the sights of the accountants' Joint Disciplinary Scheme proceedings for their failings over Equitable, the decision smacks of desperation and so is understandable if surprising and probably a first. Usually professionals are only too eager to defend their reputations. But not the Equitable bean-counters of E&Y. Which says a lot.

Certainly it surprised the trial judge Mr Justice Langley. No doubt it could well figure in his findings in the same way that those defendants in criminal trials who exercise the right to silence may now have the implication of their failure to take the opportunity to defend themselves pointed out to the jury. But then no defence lawyer wants his client to testify if he can avoid it because what is said or the impression created cannot be controlled or changed.

The JDS case is on hold pending resolution of the Equitable claim. Now McNamara and four other E&Y witnesses will not have to be asked in public about that or their willingness to accept the Equitable line that the guaranteed annuity time bomb was not ticking and could blow Equitable away – which it duly did. They will not be able to maintain their silence on such key matters once the JDS tribunal begins, probably next year. It will be interesting to see whether the tribunal will be provided with the witness statements made for the trial but now not to be made public.

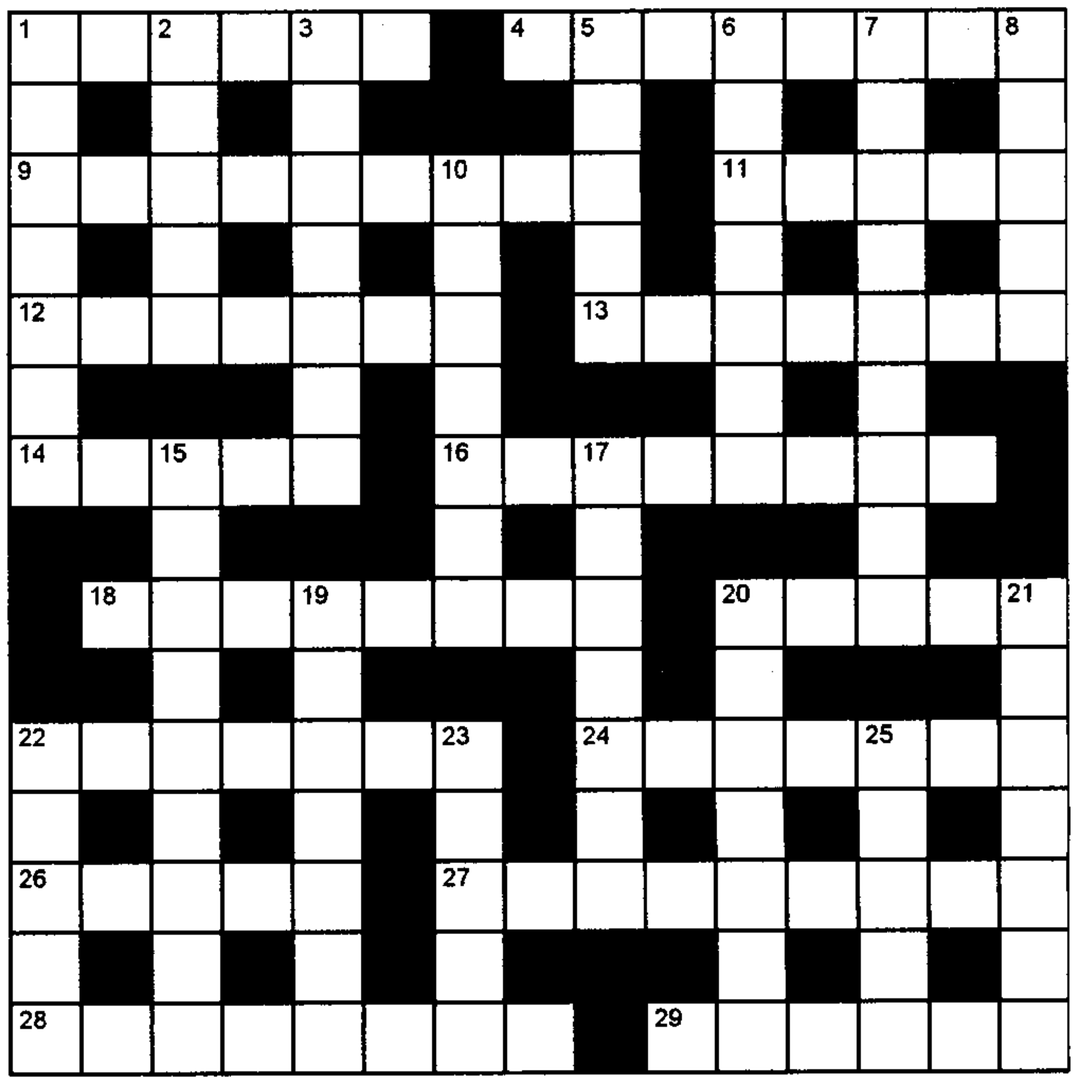
'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 292

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 29 July 2005

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

1 Group of people who swing both ways split down the middle? (6)
4 No Oscar (distraught Imelda Staunton starts a stupor) (8)
9 Weird forbearing type on crew: use him if you need a fix (3,3,3)
11 Bite all round Wendy's top and give knicker elastic a sound tweak? (5)
12 Good luck getting an easy lay as a teatime treat, maybe (3,4)
13 Law, when involved with the Yard, is stinking (7)
14/16 You'll find them plastered all over the place in our night-time city streets (5,8)
18 Weakened Blair flips during one broadcast ... (8)
20 ... signal Blair to abandon broadcast and piss around (5)
22 Put a spin on Howard's last super balls-up about "end of Conservatives" (5,2)
24 Source of crude smear – not Dicky (3,4)
26 Made to look old, backsliding cavorter, Hoover dropped out (5)
27 Adopt cautious approach to women, sexually – then paw (9)
28 Conservative to try "disregard of rule of law" (8)
29 Maintenance makes you puke – put that on the record (6)

DOWN

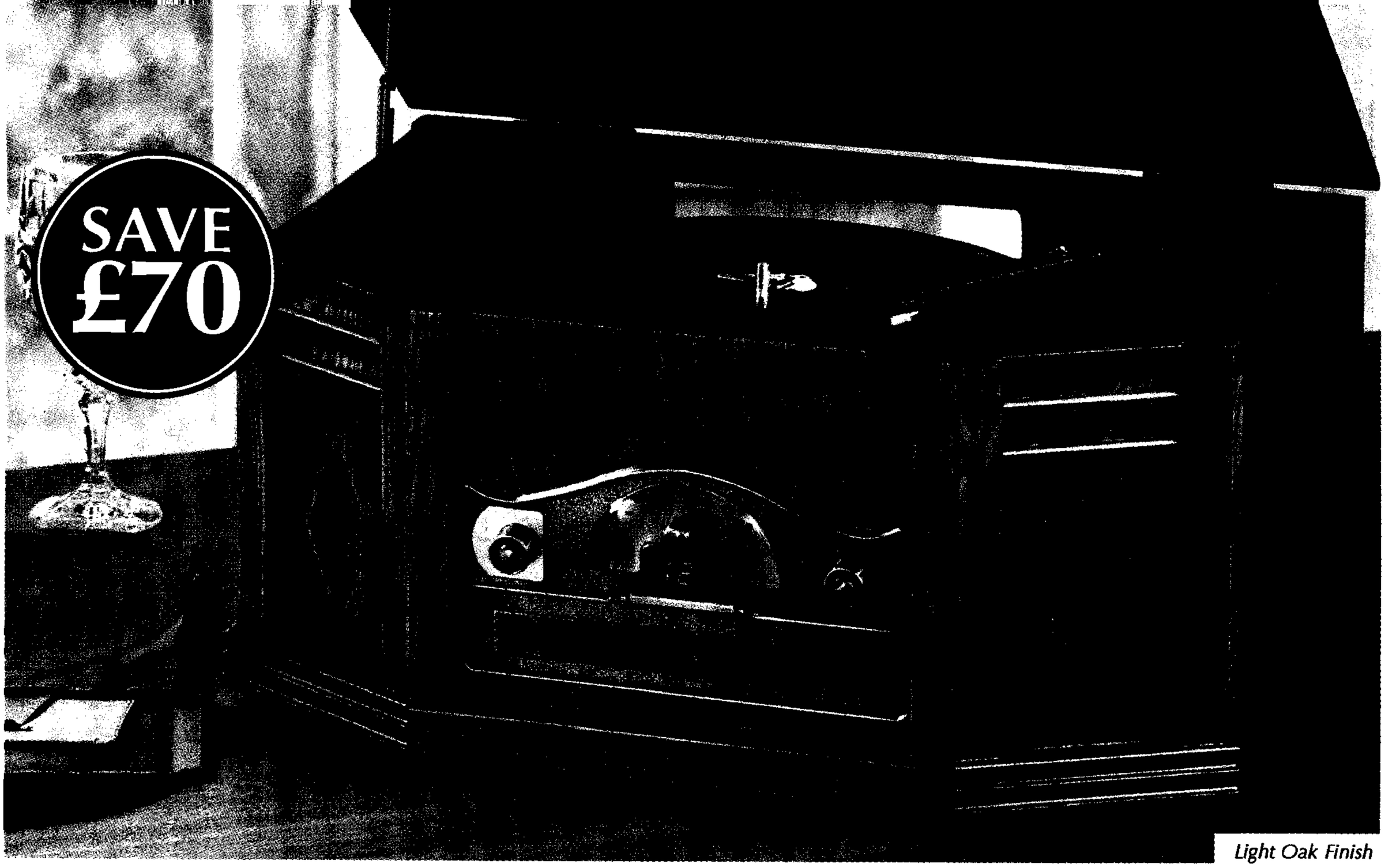
1 Expanding operation at the front: Bush and Blair initially without balls to take on the task (4,3)
2 Not a good place for gay activity when youth leaves (5)
3 Revolutionary environment for the hooker's blow job: US choir (7)
5 Vice president sticks one on head of Gingrich – Newt kicks butt (5)
6 Where a model might well be seen as 'pussy', 'tramp' (7)
7 Sting getting behind as a Mensa member? (5,4)
8 Melons "fallen out of containers" could well be, for example, doubly good inside (5)
10 Toad arm-wrestled – he's a killer in the ring (7)
15 No place for Michael Howard, an even less sensitive figure? (6,3)
17 Staying put in the House: elected party's without alternative (7)
19 Scumbag makes topless girl dive (7)
20 A woman in missionary position should be adjusting pulley beneath bishop (5,2)
21 Get your hands on woman's chest; it's sort of PC (7)
22 Architect's style: "act loaded to get end away" (5)
23 Old man's got a stiffy – "an intrusion when you're surfing the web" (3-2)
25 After stimulant, Mark gets to display luvvy-style feelings (5)

Crossword 291 winner: TONY MACK

ACROSS: 1 Thirsk 4 Adjudge 9/10/4D Playing doctors and nurses 11 Thief 12 Soundbite 13 Face-lifts 16/25 Wat Tyler 18 MGM 20 Misgovern 23 Strangled 27 Rostrum 28 Ruby Wax 29 Say when 30 Cresta.

DOWN: 1 Tipstaff 2 Iraqi 3 Skinful 5 Jackdaw 6 Doolittle 7 Easter 14 Camera-shy 15 Family man 17 Anorexia 19 Monarch 21 October 22 Osiris 24/8 Dark Ages 26 Lewes.

YOBS
HUSBAND
You were seen to throw a coin that hit one of the players on the head
Yes, Im really sorry and I'd like to opologise to the player concerned
I was aiming for the ref



Light Oak Finish

Art Deco Stereo Gramophone with Radio, CD & Tape

RRP ~~£199.99~~ £129.99

Exclusive to Dream Direct Ltd

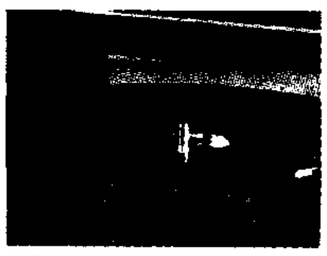
Dark Oak Finish

Plug in, relax and revel in the luxurious sound quality of this nostalgic music centre.

Beneath the sturdy lid of this beautifully crafted cabinet lies a gramophone to play records at 33, 45 or 78 rpm. There's something wonderful about the way the turntable spins as you guide the lockable playing arm towards your cherished vinyl. Or slot your favourite tape into the discreet side-loading cassette deck, dim the lights, open a bottle of wine and re-live your music memories. If you prefer the sound of CDs, a front-loading player lets you jog through tracks with an LED display. The AM/FM radio has an integral aerial to maximise reception, illuminated dial and light indicator to show you've hit the top tuning position for crisp sound.

The cabinet may be charmingly traditional but the stereo sound reproduction is state of the art, with 10 watts of peak music power output through in-built fretwork speakers. Everything is included so there are no ugly wires or bulky speaker cabinets to contend with.

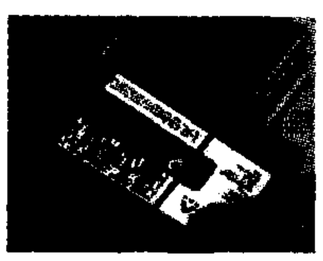
Three reassuringly sturdy knobs on the antiqued brass fascia control function, tuning and the on-off/volume effortlessly. Choose Light or Dark Oak finish to complement your décor. Height 9½", width 18¾" and depth 12¾" with 50" mains lead. An extra stylus is available for only £9.99.



LP's, Singles & 78's

AM/FM Radio

Compact discs



Cassette tapes

Order now on 0870 787 4411

24 hours, 7 days a week

Secure online ordering
enter **ZBH21** in the search box

www.DREAMdirect.co.uk

DREAM GUARANTEE

- 100% satisfaction guaranteed or your money back
- We aim to deliver within 7- 10 days
- Secure on-line ordering
- If you are unhappy with your purchase you may return it within 7 days for a full refund. Goods must be returned in mint condition, complete with all packaging and manuals.

Dream Direct, 1 Parkside, Avenue Two, Station Lane, Witney, Oxon, OX28 4YF.

Post to: Dream Direct, 1 Parkside, Avenue Two, Station Lane, Witney, Oxon, OX28 4YF.

PLEASE SEND ME	CODE	PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Music Centre Light Oak	ZBH21A	£129.99		£
Music Centre Dark Oak	ZBH21B	£129.99		£
Extra Stylus	ZBH21C	£9.99		£
Add £5.99 P&P or for Next Day Express add £9.98 P&P UK mainland only. (Excluding the Highlands of Scotland)			Plus P&P	£
			TOTAL	£

I enclose a cheque/postal order payable to Dream Direct or please debit my MasterCard / Visa / Switch / Maestro / Delta / Solo for the above amount. We do not accept Electron, American Express or Diners Cards. Please allow 5 days for cheques to clear.

Card Number

Start Date ☐☐☐☐ Expiry Date ☐☐☐☐

Issue No (Switch only) ☐☐ Card Security ☐☐☐ Last 3 digits in the signature box on the back of your card

Signature _____

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____ Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Email _____

Daytime Tel _____ (so we can contact you immediately with any queries)

© 2005 Dream Direct Limited

Media Code: ZBH21

DREAMdirect
Software, Gizmos and Gadgets

In addition to using your details to keep you informed of your order status, Dream Direct Limited, including its trading names Dream Direct, Razamataz or Boogaloo, (or via its agents) may use your information to contact you by mail, email, phone, fax or SMS to let you know about our or our business partners' products, services and special offers. By giving us this information you agree that we may contact you by these methods for marketing, including sending you our new catalogues as they are released.

If you do not wish to receive information from us please tick this box ☐
or from our business partners please tick this box ☐
For quality and training purposes, we may monitor communications.

Morgan

WAREHOUSE SURPLUS OUTLET

MAIL ORDER SALES LINE
0870 126 4831
www.morgancomputers.co.uk

Stores in London, Birmingham and Manchester.
See below for store locations/opening hours.

HP A708 SUB £250 DESKTOP PC

Entry level desktop, ideal for use as a family PC or a small office workstation.

- **Intel Celeron D 2.66GHz processor**
- **256MB DDR RAM, 80GB hard drive**
- **DVD+RW burner, built-in graphics**
- **Modem/LAN, Windows XP Home**

Stock status: As new factory re-work
Warranty: 1 year HP 'pick-up & return'

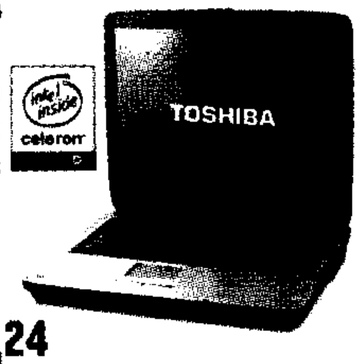
£249.99 ex VAT £293.74 inc VAT

TOSHIBA EQUIUM A60-199

With DVD SuperMulti drive, burns all popular DVD/CD formats.

- **Intel Celeron D 340 (2.93GHz)**
- **512MB RAM, 40GB hard disk**
- **15" TFT, up to 64MB graphics**
- **Modem/LAN, Win XP Home**

Stock status: As good as new
Warranty: 1 year warranty

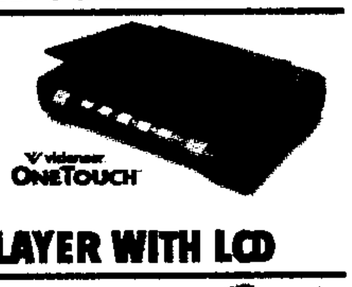


£429.99 ex VAT £505.24 inc VAT

VISIONEER A4 FLATBED SCANNER

- **OneTouch 8700USB scanner**
- **4800 x 1200 dpi optical res**
- **Inc OCR and scanning software**

Brand new stock, 1 year warranty

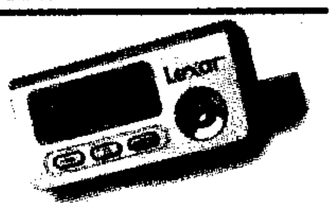


£19.99 ex VAT £23.49 inc VAT

LEXAR 128MB MP3 PLAYER WITH LCD

- **Compatible with MP3 &WMA files**
- **Doubles as a USB flash drive**
- **Supplied with earbud headphones**

Brand new stock, 1 year warranty



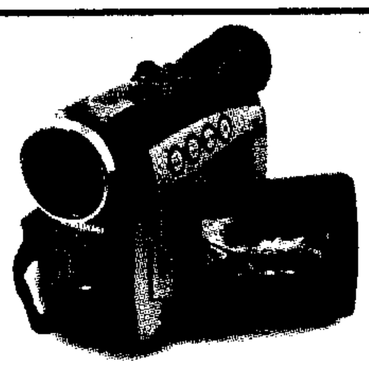
£19.99 ex VAT £23.49 inc VAT

CANON MINI-DV CAMCORDER

Canon MV700 with 18x optical zoom, image stabilisation and night mode.

- **Compact Mini-DV digital camcorder**
- **18x optical zoom, 2.5" colour LCD**
- **DIGIC DV processor, DV/AV out**
- **Inc Li-ion battery, AV cables etc**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year Canon warranty



£169.99 ex VAT £199.74 inc VAT

TRUST WEBCAM BUNDLE

- **USB webcam with free headset**
- **352 x 288 dpi res, 30 frames/sec**
- **Includes video editing software**

Brand new with 2 year warranty

£9.99 ex VAT £11.74 inc VAT

BELKIN USB CARD READER

- **8-in-1 digital media card reader**
- **Compatible with CF, SM, SD & MS**
- **Includes photo editing software**

Brand new, lifetime Belkin warranty

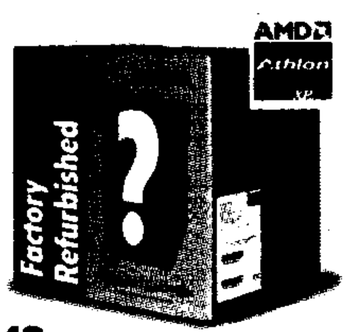
£4.99 ex VAT £5.86 inc VAT

FAMOUS BRAND DEAL

Brand name embargo! Boxed with keyboard, mouse and software.

- **Athlon XP 3200+ (2.2GHz)**
- **512MB RAM, 160GB drive**
- **DVD±RW, integrated graphics**
- **TV tuner, 56K/LAN, XP Home**

Stock status: Factory refurb stock
Warranty: 1 year on-site warranty



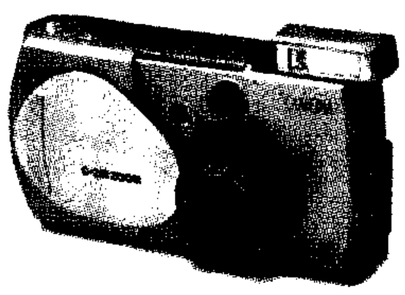
£299.99 ex VAT £352.49 inc VAT

OLYMPUS DIGITAL CAMERA

C-220z: ideal for snapshots or to let the kids loose on world of photography.

- **2 megapixel CCD (1600 x 1200 dpi)**
- **3x optical zoom lens, built-in flash**
- **TFT screen, movie clip recording**
- **USB interface, uses SMedia cards**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year Olympus warranty



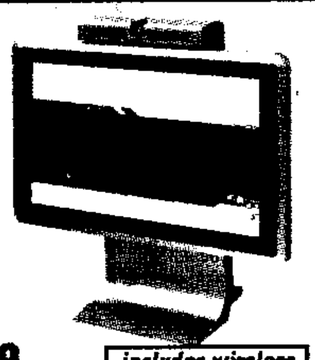
£49.99 ex VAT £58.74 inc VAT

ADVENT ALL-IN-ONE PC

Advent T1, ultimate space saving design with 17" widescreen TFT.

- **Intel Pentium 4 3.2GHz HT**
- **512MB RAM, 250GB drive**
- **DVD±RW, TV tuner, webcam**
- **WiFi, modem, Win XP Home**

Stock status: Advent factory re-work
Warranty: 1 year return-to-base



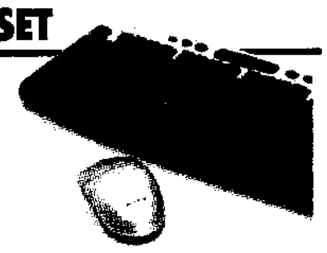
£599.99 ex VAT £704.99 inc VAT

includes wireless keyboard/mouse

BELKIN WIRELESS DESKSET

- **Wireless keyboard/optical mouse**
- **Features 7 multimedia/7 hot keys**
- **PS/2 or USB connection to PC**

Brand new stock, Lifetime warranty

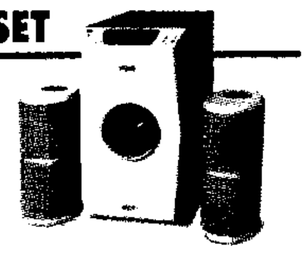


£12.99 ex VAT £15.26 inc VAT

AIWA 3.1 USB SPEAKER SET

- **Stylish design with virtual 3.1**
- **81W RMS, volume/bass controls**
- **Direct USB and analogue inputs**

Brand new stock, 1 year warranty



£39.99 ex VAT £46.99 inc VAT

ADVENT T9003 3.2GHz DESKTOP

Loads of storage, DVD±RW and DVD-ROM drives, TV tuner and card reader.

- **Intel Pentium 4 540 (3.2GHz) chip**
- **512MB RAM, 250GB hard drive**
- **DVD±R/±RW, 256MB ATi graphics**
- **Modem/LAN, XP Home & Works**

Stock status: Factory re-work stock
Warranty: 1 year return-to-base

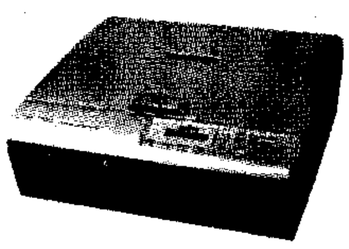
£399.99 ex VAT £469.99 inc VAT

PRINTER, COPIER, SCANNER

Brother 110c multifunction inkjet with 7-in-1 media card reader.

- **High res 1200 x 600 printing**
- **Flatbed scanning with OCR**
- **A4 single page photocopying**
- **Inc scanning/OCR software**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year Brother on-site



£49.99 ex VAT £58.74 inc VAT

HP SUBNOTEBOOK BUNDLE

HP nc4000 ultra portable PC, only 28mm thick & just 1.6Kg!

- **Intel Pentium M 1.5GHz chip**
- **256MB RAM, 30GB hard drive**
- **12.1" TFT, SD/PCMCIA slots**
- **Windows XP Professional Ed.**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 3 year HP warranty

£499.99 ex VAT £587.49 inc VAT

TOSHIBA EQUIUM NOTEBOOK

A60-157 with DVD SuperMulti drive - burns all popular DVD/CD formats.

- **Intel Pentium 4 538 (3.20GHz) chip**
- **512MB DDR RAM, 60GB hard drive**
- **15" TFT, up to 64MB graphics**
- **56K/LAN ports, Windows XP Home**

Stock status: Good as new classified stock
Warranty: 1 year warranty

£529.99 ex VAT £622.74 inc VAT

BEKO 15" FLAT PANEL TV

- **15" LCD television with teletext**
- **Can also be used as a PC monitor**
- **Stereo speakers, inc ir remote**

Grade A refurb with 1 year warranty

£139.99 ex VAT £164.49 inc VAT

TREO 600 PHONE & PALM PDA

- **Organise, make calls, email etc**
- **Colour TFT with touch screen input**
- **32MB RAM, SD/MMC card slot**

Brand new, SIM free, 1 yr Palm wty

£199.99 ex VAT £234.99 inc VAT

TO HAVE A FREE COPY OF OUR FLYER DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR EVERY MONTH PLEASE CALL 0870 126 4831

CENTRAL LONDON
64-72 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1AX
Tel 020 7255 2115
Fax 020 7436 6285

GREENFORD
Unit 25 Derby Road
Metropolitan Ctr UB6 8UJ
Tel 020 8575 0055
Fax 020 8575 7985

BIRMINGHAM
34 Edgbaston Centre, Hagley Road, Birmingham B16 8SH
Tel 0121 452 1141
Fax 0121 455 6855

MANCHESTER
Unit 11-12 Station Approach
Manchester M1 2GH
Tel 0161 237 1111
Fax 0161 237 3146

BUSINESS HOURS
Monday-Friday 9.00am-5.30pm
New Oxford St late night Thurs 'til 7.30
Saturday 9.00am-5.00pm
Sunday 10.00am-4.00pm
Greenford branch closed at weekends

Stock & prices subject to change, E&OE

NT

FREELY ADAPTED FROM GOGOL'S THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR A COMEDY BY DAVID FARR

The UN Inspector

The Travelex £10 Season

National Theatre

★★★★
Daily Mail

'HILARIOUSLY FUNNY AND CHILLING.'
Daily Telegraph

'An ingenious update of Gogol's great comedy.'
Independent

'OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES.'
Guardian

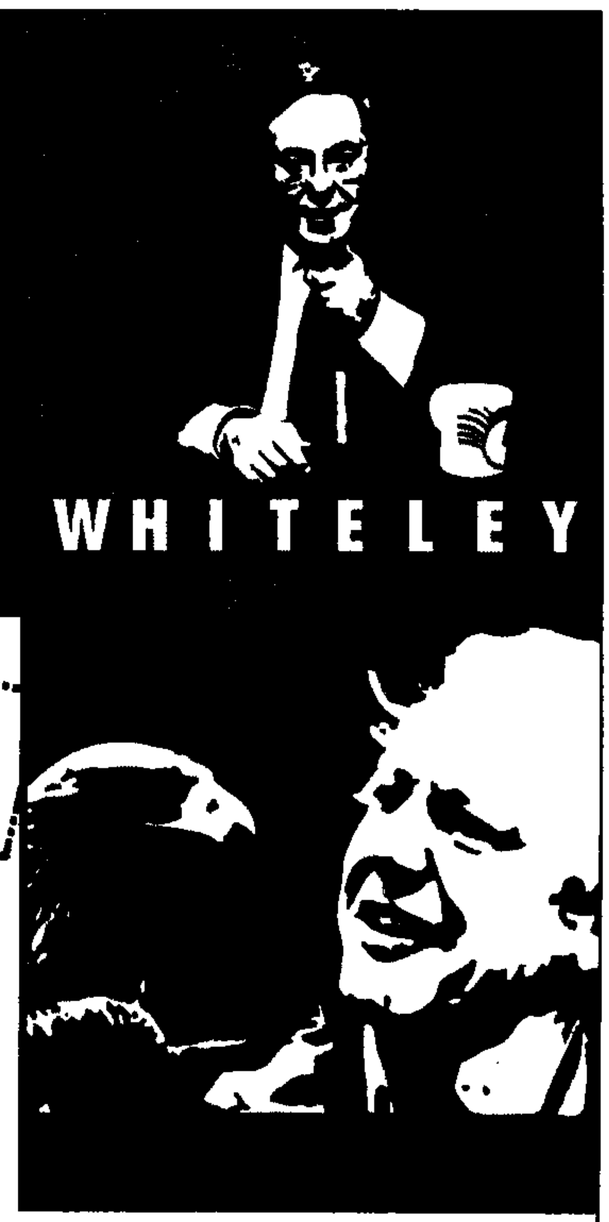
'Michael Sheen gives a scathingly brilliant and inventive performance.'
Sunday Times

photo (Michael Sheen) by Alastair Muir

Travelex

Evening Standard

020 7452 3000 nationaltheatre.org.uk



We are not afraid

T-shirts £18 (inc P&P) - see our full range at

TEEMARTO.COM

Call: 01276 488 000

COME BACK AND FINISH HIM

OFF

MONTY PYTHON
DOUNE CASTLE SUN 4 SEPT

Join us for something completely different at one of the key locations of 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail'. There's a screening of the film, a Python sing-a-long and competitions for Best Python costume and Best Impersonation. So come along for more fun than you can shake a sword at. Event starts at 4.30pm. Tickets in advance: Adults £15, Concession £10.

FOR MORE DETAILS, CALL HUB TICKETS ON 0131 473 2000

HISTORIC SCOTLAND

SAVE 42%

PRIVATE EYE

7 GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE & SAVE

1. It's a **GREAT** magazine
2. Money back guarantee (for unmailed issues)
3. Enjoy massive savings – **MORE THAN £15** on the cover price
4. Free Delivery – your low cost subscription includes delivery by first class mail direct to your door
5. Never miss an issue
6. Beat the price rise - offer available for a limited period
7. **26 issues for ONLY £21 ***

www.private-eye.co.uk

0870 750 1714 Or 01795 414 871
Overseas +44 (0) 1795 414 870

TO: PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS, PO BOX 326, SITTINGBOURNE, KENT ME9 8FA

OFFER ENDS 30TH AUGUST 2005

☐ YES, I would like to subscribe to Private Eye.

YOUR DETAILS

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

☐ Yes, I would like to receive news of other products and services from Private Eye.

RECIPIENT DETAILS (for gift subscriptions)

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Rates for one year (26 issues) UK £21* Europe & Eire £29 Rest of world £38

☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____ (payable to PRIVATE EYE, overseas subscribers can also pay by International Money Order)

☐ I would like to pay by Visa / Mastercard / Switch (Issue number_____)

Card number Start date Expiry

Signature Date

☐ I would like to pay by Direct Debit Originator's identification no: 768299 DIRECT Debit

To the Manager (Bank name)

Bank address Postcode

Name of account holder

Account number ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Branch sort code ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Signature Date

N1137

The real you deserves a real relationship

If you're serious about finding a relationship, it's time to go online and take Parship's unique psychometric test.

Full of insights, it means that Parship only matches you with people who will be genuinely right for you.

PARSHIP: trusted by more than one million people across Europe

www.parship.co.uk PARSHIP.co.uk Find the love of your life

SEVENTY THIRTY

MILLIONAIRES AND HIGH NET WORTH INDIVIDUALS

MATCHMAKING, PARTNER HEADHUNTING AND LIFESTYLE SERVICE.
An elite team of psychologists, psychotherapists, fashion and style advisers will work as hard as you do to find you the right partner. Our sophisticated matchmaking service is designed to assist successful men and women achieve quality relationships. We provide a one to one in-depth approach to matchmaking and introduce our members to individuals who are screened for compatibility. Our clients are from all backgrounds and ages.

Tel: 020 7863 8880 www.seventy-thirty.com

---

same day doctor

Fully confidential Sexual Health Clinic in Harley Street W1

Same day Appointments
Same day HIV results
+
General Medical & Psychological Consultations

114 Harley Street, London W1G 7JJ
www.samedaydoctor.co.uk
0207 935 0113

BIRTHDAY NEWSPAPERS

Births, Birthdays, Weddings, Christenings, Anniversaries, Retirements. Papers from archives 1642-2003. Sundays from 1915. Quality presentations. Same day dispatch.

REMEMBER WHEN
445 Brighton Road,
Croydon, Surrey CR2 6EU
www.remember-when.co.uk

020 8763 6363
or call FREE 0500 520 000

Lost out due to bad advice?

Why don't you sue your accountant/solicitor/surveyor
Contact: GORVINS on 0800 015 9986 or email enquiries@gorvins.com

---

drawing down *the* moon

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION AGENCY

"a partner for life... that's where Drawing Down the Moon comes in"
FINANCIAL TIMES

020 7937 6263

Adam & Eve Mews, Kensington.
24 hours. Member ABIA. Est. 1984
www.drawingdownthemoon.co.uk

Accountz

Personal Accounts Home finance software wins 5 stars for ease of use. Find out how it can help **you** today. Call **08700 111747** or visit **www.accountz.com**

'Simple and easy to use' The Times

PC Home GOLD AWARD ★★★★★

Order by phone 0113 281 7711 or online at www.frownies.co.uk

SOUGHT: LADIES 30-40,
professional and warm-hearted, elegant and outgoing for our wealthy client who is 42, a Londoner, very romantic and gentle. He likes skiing, playing tennis, travelling and romantic hideaways. If you would like to meet our client please reply to info@seventy-thirty.com subject: Private Eye Ad PE0857. The matchmaking process is free for you as our client is paying for our services.

ESCAPE?

Are you a teacher?
Are you thinking of leaving teaching?
Have you already left teaching?

If so we would be very interested in knowing why you made that decision.
We are researchers at the University of Hertfordshire working on a project that aims to better understand the reasons why teachers decide to leave teaching.

Could you help us by spending a few minutes filling in our confidential on-line questionnaire? It should take no more than 15 minutes to complete and is available here: http://surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=76273998106

Alternatively, you can ask our research team to send you a paper version of the survey.

Please direct any requests or questions to Pat by telephoning **01799 586523** or emailing **pab73@cam.ac.uk**.

Thank you so much for your help and attention.

August Bonanza Summer Sale!

Call Susan on 020 7878 2313 for the best price on advertising you will ever get in our Aug 5 and Aug 19 issues

SPECIAL OFFER!!

ARENA PURSUITS

Situated in the heart of South East England on 250 acres overlooking Bewl Water. Only 8 miles from Tunbridge Wells.

- TEAM BUILDING
- CORPORATE ENTERTAINMENT
- HEN/STAG PARTIES
- QUAD BIKING
- SCHOOL EVENTS
- JUNIOR BIRTHDAY PARTIES

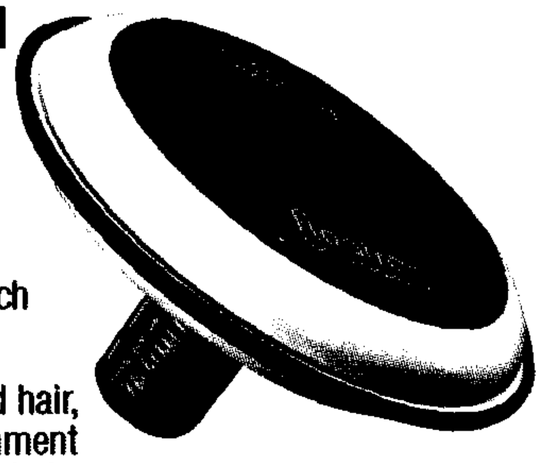
TEL: 01580 879 614
www.arenapursuits.com
Rosemary House, Rosemary Lane, Flimwell, E. Sussex TN5 7PT

ARENA ... Situated in the heart of South East England, Arena has a wide range of activities for Corporate Groups through Hen and Stag weekends to Juniors. Whether it is a company 00.7 Bond Day with helicopters or quad biking for 6, Arena can help. "We sell FUN from Corporate to Kids"

SOUGHT: WOMEN IN HER LATE 40S, EARLY 50S,
Caucasian of European origin, moderately extroverted, with a genuine, kind, warm disposition. She should be intelligent with a sense of humour and not be too invested in a career path. Should not have children who are still in her care, and must live in North London. Our client is in his early 60s, wealthy and retired but extremely youthful and active. Our client is looking for a long-term relationship. If you would like to meet our client please reply to info@seventy-thirty.com subject: Private Eye Ad PE08532 or telephone 020 7863 8880. The matchmaking process is free for you as our client is paying for our services.

Swimming pool and pond owners

Have a crystal clear pool all year round and save 80% on chemical costs.



Floatron® uses a process called ionization to convert pool water into sparkling healthy mineral water in which algae and bacteria cannot thrive.

With **Floatron®** there is no bleached hair, stinging eyes, damage to the environment or other problems associated with Chlorine usage.

Floatron® works well with a pool cover.
Floatron® also efficiently controls algae and bacteria in water features and fish ponds.
Floatron® costs nothing to power and operate. It is unobtrusive and portable - only the size of a Frisbee.
Floatron® minimises pool maintenance time.
Floatron® costs £200 inclusive and has a two year warranty.

"The children love the clear and clean water. No red eyes and no chlorine smell"
"The clarity of the water since using Floatron has really impressed me"
"The difference is amazing. No pool owner should be without one"
"Maintenance time has been cut to about ten minutes a week"

Help the environment & your swimmers
Contact: Floatron UK
Telephone: 01256 770246
Email: info@floatron.co.uk
Web: www.floatron.co.uk

floatron

UK's leading supplier of USB promotional merchandise

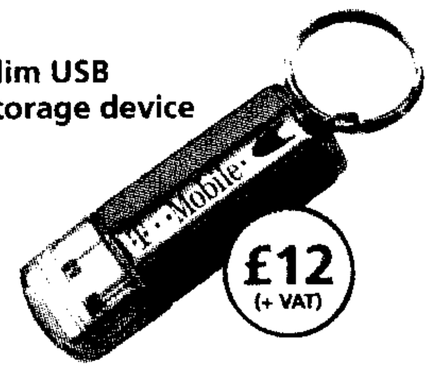
corporate branded gifts

Jade Tec

Prices based on 100 unit quantity and exclude VAT and logo print costs

Ballpoint pen with integrated USB memory storage device

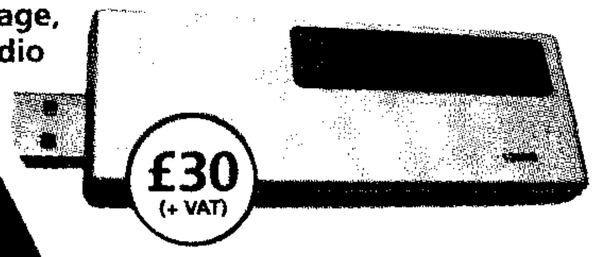
Slim USB storage device



£12 (+ VAT)

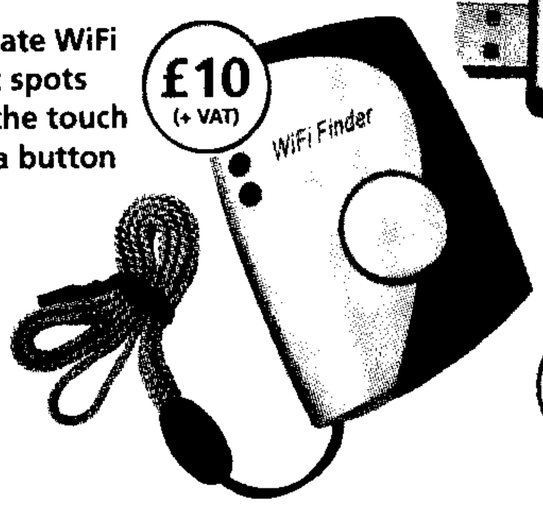
£19 (+ VAT)

MP3 player, USB storage, voice recorder, FM radio



£30 (+ VAT)

Locate WiFi hot spots at the touch of a button



£10 (+ VAT)

Credit card shaped removable USB storage device with calculator

£16 (+ VAT)

www.jadetec.co.uk
sales: 0113 281 7788 • fax: 0870 138 4213
sales@jadetec.co.uk

Products shown are not actual size

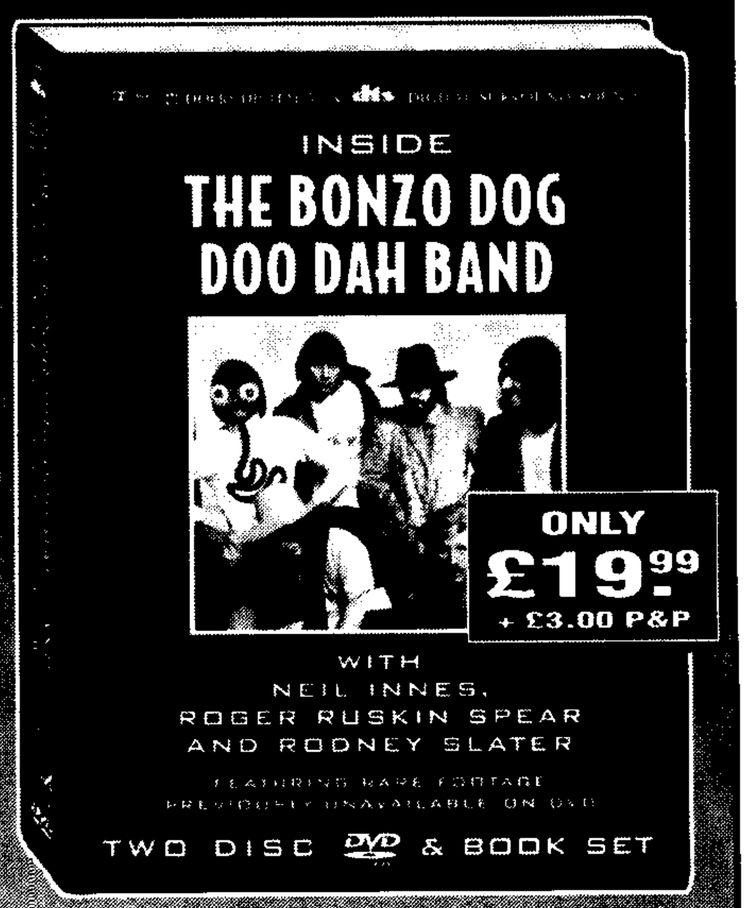
SERIOUSLY FUNNY

2 DVD & BOOK SET

DVD 1

DVD 2

48 page book by Chris Welch

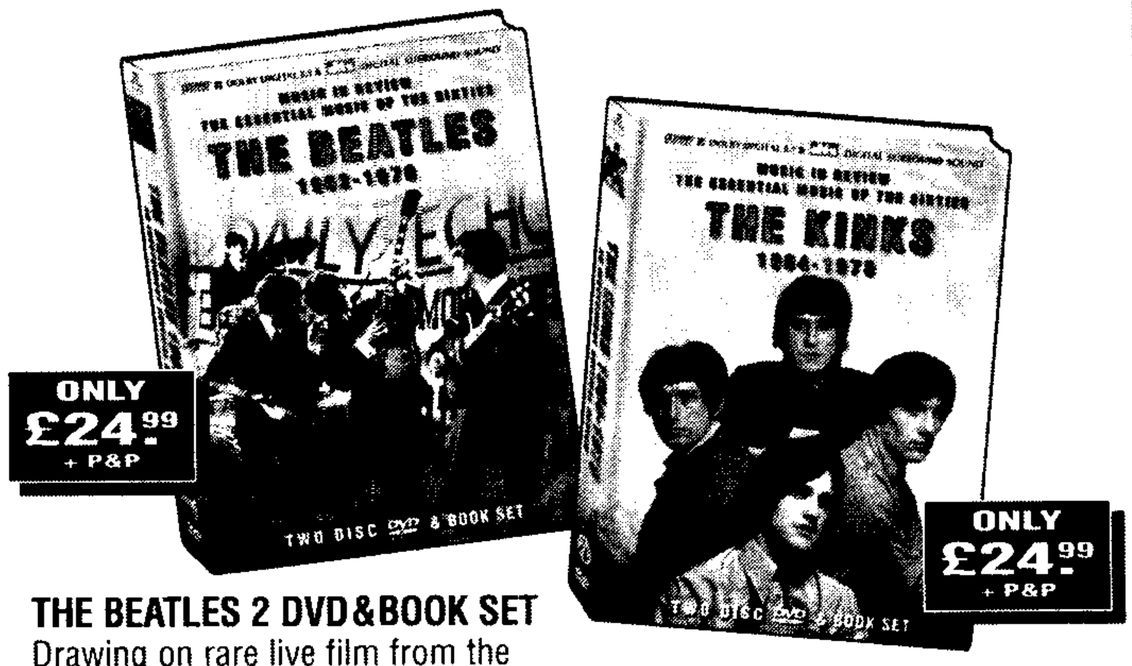


ONLY £19.99 + £3.00 P&P

WITH NEIL INNES, ROGER RUSKIN SPEAR AND RODNEY SLATER

This is the long awaited critical review of the Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band on stage, on record and on film. This comprehensive and authoritative double DVD and book set combines extensive reflections on life in the band by Neil Innes, Roger Ruskin Spear and Rodney Slater, with rare archive film of the Bonzos in performance, much of which has never previously been available on DVD.

SHIPPING SEPTEMBER 1st AT A SPECIAL PRE-SALE PRICE OF £19.99



ONLY £24.99 + P&P

ONLY £24.99 + P&P

THE BEATLES 2 DVD&BOOK SET

Drawing on rare live film from the archives this powerful assessment of the Beatles features every major release from the birth of the band through to the final split.

Features *Love Me Do, From Me To You, All My Loving, Can't Buy Me Love, She Loves You, Eight Days A Week, I Saw Her Standing There, I Feel Fine* ... and many more.

SHIPPING NOW!

THE KINKS 2 DVD & BOOK SET

This is the ultimate critical review of the work of the Kinks whose influence is still felt today, and features every major release from 1964 to 1978.

Features *You Really Got Me, All Day And All Of The Night, Lola, Waterloo Sunset* ... and more.

SHIPPING NOW!

CALL THE MAIL ORDER HOTLINE 01926 332640

Please send me: Bonzo book set ☐ Beatles book set ☐ Kinks book set ☐

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

..... Postcode: .....

Please debit Visa ☐ Switch ☐ American Express ☐ Mastercard ☐

Card no: .....

Valid from.....Expiry date .....Issue no .....Security no .....

Please pay by cheque (payable to Classic Rock Direct) or credit card. Please add £3.00 for post and packing. Call 01926 332640, visit classicrockdirect.com, or fill in this form and send it to Classic Rock Direct, 20 Hawkes Drive (Unit 2), Heathcote Industrial Estate, Warwick CV34 6LX,

www.classicrockdirect.com

PRIVATE EYE

CLASSIFIED
020 7240 9129

£2.60 per word (£26 min charge)
Colour box £15
Box number £15
First ad in section £10
All charges VAT inclusive

Copy date for 5 Aug issue will be 1pm, Monday 25 July

You can email your ad to:
private-eye@mcmslondon.co.uk
or fax: 020 7379 7118

Reply to Box Numbers at:
Private Eye, McMillan-Scott,
9 Savoy Street
London WC2E 7HR

EYE TO EYE

GENUINE GUY, mid-twenties, London based, educated professional, would like to meet similar lady to enjoy fun, days out, countryside, wine bars and friendship, possibly relationship. Reply Box 135701.

LATE THIRTIES' LADY looking for honest, decent gentleman who likes working and playing hard, sports, outdoors and some of life's refinements. Reply Box 135704.

EARLY THIRTIES' GUY, professional, educated, would like to meet genuine lady with similar interests. Like: outdoors, theatre, sports and arts. Looking for friendship / relationship. Reply Box 135709.

LADY, 40s, loves life and is looking for love with genuine man 40-50 years' old. Enjoy going out, staying in, arts and crafts, sports and theatre. Reply Box 135712.

"I had a good response to my ad, met some lovely people and would recommend Eye to Eye to anyone looking for a genuine relationship"
Rob from London

INDEPENDENT LONDONER, 61, would like to meet an attractive and intelligent lady who fancies the occasional meal in a different restaurant. nosscott@hotmail.co.uk

ENGLISH GENTLEMAN, honest, kind, handsome, solvent seeks English rose or Scandinavian 30s-40s for fun leading to long-term relationship. Photo appreciated. redstart12@hotmail.co.uk

GORGEOUSLY DELICIOUS, slim, fit, feminine, non-smoking entrepreneur, 52. Loving, fun-loving, stylish, well-travelled, seeks a warm, caring, unconventional, unattached male, 52-62 to share ultimate, loving, whatever adventure. Reply Box 136917.

WHEELIE NICE GUY, (wheelchair user) 38, eclectic and humorous, seeks open-minded female for friendship. Culture vultures, bon viveurs and adventurous types welcome. Absence makes the heart grow fungus, so don't delay, email today! Reply to me@smial.freeserve.co.uk

EYE ART

PHOTOS ON CANVAS. Your favourite photos as art. www.digpics.co.uk

FOUR ORIGINAL Mackenzie Thorpe pastels from £900 – £3,500. Must sell to pay tax. Email for pics and description. beck@luke80.freeserve.co.uk

EYE BET

£250 + FREE BETS. Compare odds from 20 bookmakers @ www.bookies.com

EYE ENTERAINMENT

TOP QUALITY sleight-of-hand entertainer for your next event. www.mystifier.co.uk

EYE NOVELTIES

GIFTS FOR THE REDHEAD IN YOUR LIFE – www.redandproud.com – Tel: 01844 274 635.

WWW.GIZMOANDWIDGET.COM "I think your site is fab!" Louise.

CATALOGUE of rare Russian and Japanese watches. Telephone (0115) 982 7741. www.russia4u.co.uk/eye

TITLES-LORD, LADY ETC. Tel/fax: 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk

THE PERFECT SPORTING FANTASY. www.sportingglory.com

BORED OF DULLARD SITES? 'The Army Rumour Service' (www.arrse.co.uk) and mingle with the best of British!

TAILGATED BY MORONS? VISIT ninepointsthatswhy.com

EYE ESCAPE

OVERLAND TRUCK EXPEDITIONS: 10 days to 30 weeks across Africa – S. America – Middle East. Tel: 01963 363 400. www.oasisoverland.co.uk

13TH CENTURY MANOR: Houseparties / Reunions. Sleeps 24. Tennis / Swimming. Services as required. Idyllic setting Somerset / Devon border. Tel: 0870 752 4501 – www.gerbestonemanor.com

TRURO, CORNWALL. Luxury self-catering converted hayloft. Sleeps 2/3. Tel: 01872 865 101. info@chapel-view-farm.co.uk

www.mountainparadise.co.uk Mountain Paradise specialises in holidays to the High Tatras and unspoilt mountain range in one of the most beautiful undiscovered areas in the heart of Europe.

PUGLIA: good selection of accommodation including Trulli - www.apuliabella.com

PROVENCE, NEAR UZES. Magnificent estate. Tranquillity, views, exceptional location, 2 pools. Four units rented separately or together. www.saintcastor.com 0033 466 790 984.

DEAL, KENT. Writer's home, built 1707. Old fashioned. 30 seconds from sea, conservation area. £420 per week. Telephone: 020 7704 9269. Email: lottakjellberg@yahoo.co.uk

TUSCANY: For that extra special holiday for two. www.tuscanyfortwo.com

HIGHLAND PERTHSHIRE – Huge lovely Victorian house and garden, sleeps twelve: 01887 829839 www.grandtullybridgehouse.co.uk

DEVON/CORNWALL BORDER. Cottage on organic farm. Tranquil location, wildlife, fresh food. Tel: 01409 221 256. www.westchillafarm.co.uk

CRETE: Beautiful holiday apartments next to lovely sandy beach. www.cretansun.com

TENERIFE, LAS AMERICAS. Apartment in 3-star hotel on sea front. Quiet area, from £75pppw. Tel: 01803 526 168.

REAL ALES & GREAT WINES? Clear air, pure water and sheer enjoyment. Colwall Park Hotel in the Malvern Hills – Restaurant of the Year and AA Courtesy & Care Awards. Gourmet breaks from £79.00 pppn 2+ nights. Tel: 01684 540000. www.colwall.com

LARGE APARTMENT, large private pool, Uzes, Western province, Nimes Ryan Air; Avignon/Nimes Eurostar/TGV. Available 6 Sept onwards, no specific changeover day, travel at cheap times to maximise your budget. Discount possible / long let possible www.lacigale.biz 0033 (0) 466 585 604 moira.hughes@wanadoo.fr

To place your classified advert in the next issue call Susan on 020 7240 9129

EYE FINANCE

WE INCORPORATE COMPANIES UK and Overseas. Tel: 01372 750 800. www.formacompany.com

BRITAIN'S BEST STOCK-MARKET report is free from www.Uk-Analyst.com Plus, quality share tips from 20 top tipsters including the infamous Evil Knievil. All FREE from www.UK-Analyst.com UK-Analyst.com is owned by t1ps.com Ltd which is authorised and regulated by the FSA. Investing in equities puts your capital at risk.

WANTED – Investors in Israeli technology fund. For further information: edarduscapital @tiscali.co.uk

EYE HOMES

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Islington in the Chilterns. Detached five bed '30's house in an acre in Chesham Bois. Fully renovated – wood floors, La Cornue / Bulthaup, Starck, English Heritage triple garage, Vale conservatory. Walking distance to Underground, Chiltern Turbo and excellent prep and State schools. OIRO £1,25m. Tel: 07776 21 45 63 – Stephen Potter

EYE HELP

ACCOMMODATION ADDRESS: private, discreet, confidential mail / message holding service, REGENT STREET. Established 1979. Tel: 020 7580 4242. Email: enquiry@hold-everything.com – www.hold-everything.com

IN DEBT? BANKRUPTCY? IVA? Credit cards? Call DebtDoctor. Tel: 07970 475 554.

EYE READ

FREE BOOKSEARCH – No purchase obligation. Twiggers Booksearch – Telephone: 01304 365 511. booksearch@twiggers.com

READ THE HOTTEST THRILLER of 2005: The Sunset Merchants by Harry Jordan (ISBN 1-4134-3921-7). www.amazon.co.uk or www.harryjordan.com

THE CAPTIVE SUMMER. The perfect adventure story. ISBN 0-9546447-0-0. Amazon.co.uk

PRIVATE EYE needs issue 35 urgently! Tel: 020 7437 4017.

EYE BUSINESS

YOU NEED TO MAKE MORE MONEY, each and every month! To find out how, get '41 Rare & Unusual Money-Making methods'. Go now to www.thecash academy.com/76_1054.html

PROMOTIONAL DVDs and TV adverts from around £3000 by small TV production company. Clients include hotels, golf clubs, pop bands and manufacturing industry. Details: dw.atv@btinternet.com or phone 01270 820 026.

CREATE YOUR OWN internet telephone business. www.cellwireless.com/andresc

EYE SELL

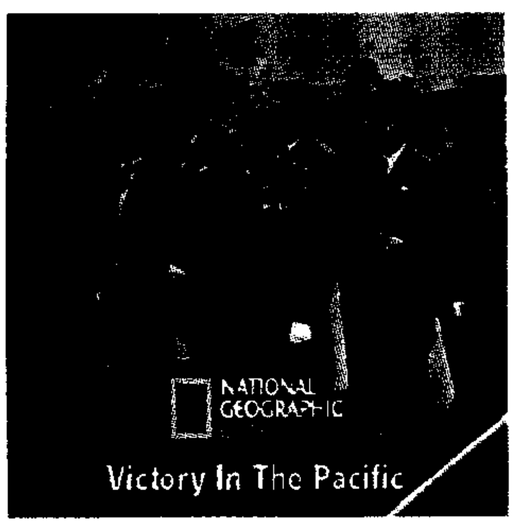
THE UK'S MOST POPULAR GIFT IDEA! A 'title' plus land in the Scottish highlands. Unaffordable? Not any more! www.scottishhighlandtitles.com

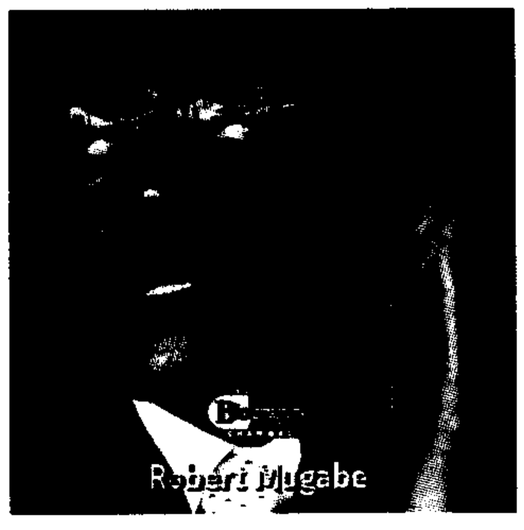
To submit your advert the easy way go to www.eyeadvertise.co.uk

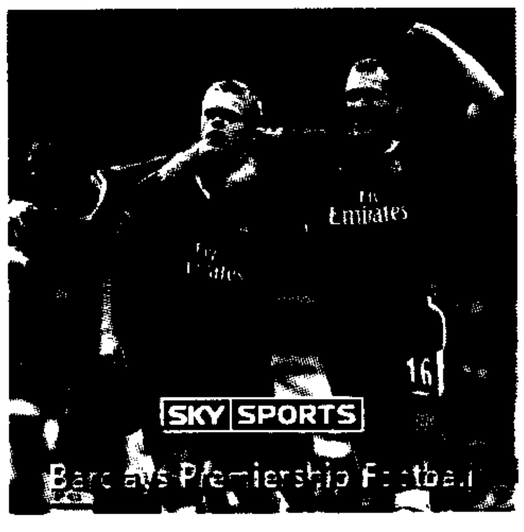
BREAKING NEWS...

SKY TV FREE FOR A MONTH

on all packages from £19.50* a month before 31 August 2005







YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST

Keep abreast with local news, world events and current affairs with 24-hour Sky News, CNN and NBC news channels. Or turn to specialised channels like Bloomberg for financial headlines and stock market reports.

GET THE FACTS

Learn more about nature, travel, science, history, outer space and the world around us with award-winning documentaries on National Geographic, Discovery, The History Channel plus many others.

PROPER CELEBRITIES

From musicians to movie stars or sportsmen to statesmen, discover the people behind the publicity with fascinating programmes on The Biography Channel. The History Channel is also packed with insights into the people who shape our world.

SPORT AND MORE SPORT

Find out why Premiership footballers earn so much, or simply sit back and enjoy 88 live Barclays Premiership games on Sky Sports. There's also live coverage of international cricket, golf, tennis and much more.

sky

OFFER WORTH UP TO £191

FREE EQUIPMENT FREE STANDARD INSTALLATION

Call Sky now 08702 423 962 or visit sky.com

*£21 a month from 01/09/05.

Worth £191: Based on Sky's current price of Freesat from Sky (includes a Sky box, dish, standard installation and initial viewing card). Plus one month's free viewing on Sky World with Family Pack (currently £4.1 a month).

Lines are open 08.30–23.00, 7 days a week. If you would like to order Sky digital, please have your debit card ready.

One month free: First month's subscription payable on ordering and appears as a credit on your account. Second month's subscription is free on any package from £19.50 a month (£21 a month from 01/09/05). Not available to previous or existing customers or with any other subscription offer. Excludes Stand-alone Premium Channels, Sky Box Office movies and other pay-per-view events. If you end your subscription contract or break the terms of it in the first 12 months, you can be charged £120 (our full standard installation price) and be required to compensate Sky for the subscription payments due over the remainder of your minimum term. **Free Sky box offer:** You do not have to subscribe to Sky digital. You must enter into an Interactive Discount Contract (IDC). Offer limited to one per household. You are ineligible if you have entered into an IDC or your household has benefited from one. **Installation:** Standard installation is free on packages from £19.50 (£21 from 01/09/05) per month, £60 when you select any other package or £120 if you don't subscribe. **Sky digital subscription:** Packages up to £41 (£42.50 from 01/09/05) per month. Extra costs may apply for non-standard installation. Box must be connected to fixed telephone line for 12 months. You must get any consents required (e.g. landlord's). Minimum Sky digital subscription 12 months. You must be 18 or over. Prices (increase from 01/09/05), channels/programmes subject to change. Further terms apply. Information only applies to residential customers in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man. Correct at print (08/05).

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – mostly £100-£3000. Shed not shop – telephone first. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. Tel: 01622 871 353.

FCEK – the Irish connection and other t-shirts at www.wot4.co.uk

LABOUR PARY? Conservative Party? Why bother? Buy yourself a hi-fi or flat screen from Richer Sounds and have your own party. For the UK's cheapest hi-fi, DVD, plasma screens, LCD TV, portables, freeview and loads more, call 0870 900 1000 for your local store or click www.richersounds.com

DRIVE PUSSY WILD! Purrfect gift ideas. www.sparkipuss.com... for cat lovers.

SIGNED MEMORABILIA. Movies, historical, theatre, 5000 illustrated autographs for sale at www.autograph-gallery.co.uk

ESCAPE TO CORNWALL! Independent Wine Merchants for sale. Tremendous potential. Training given. Details @ www.mountsbaywine.co.uk

SUPERB TRADITIONAL KITCHEN units in solid pine, oak, maple or ready for painting. For details of an outstanding product at truly affordable prices phone 01249 814815 or sales@thekitchencupboard.co.uk

PIED-A-TERRE, £89,950, beautifully fitted narrowboat, central London, CH, luxury amenities. a.purnell@ukonline.co.uk

NOGGIN NOSTALGIA! Entire television series of Noggin the Nog, by Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin on double-tape VHS video: 21 glorious episodes (black and white / colour), £35 post-paid. Cheque/P.O. to: Mailmart, 3 Belmont Park, Belfast BT4 3DU.

T-SHIRT, GSOH, seeks buyer for nights out, maybe more. £9.99+p&p essential. www.thebeestees.com

EYE CARE

FUN AND RELAXING massage therapy. Telephone Remi: 020 7713 8531.

EYE SAY

CHANGE THE FUTURE – www.republic.org.uk – Tel: 08708 508 825.

EYE LAW

YES, you can now come direct to a barrister. Tel: 020 7833 9625.

EYE EARN

BEST ONLINE POKER offer yet: Partypoker.com giving 50% bonus on first $50 deposit ONLY if member introduces you. Member receives $50, so I'll share! I get $25, you get $50. Deal! ntlmark@ntlworld.com

COMPUTER / INTERNET USERS WANTED. Earn £500-£5,000 a month. Training / support provided. www.iworkformyself.com

EYE LEARN

INTENSIVE DRIVING COURSES in Salisbury. Start Monday, test Friday. Tel: 01747 826 434.

EYE EVENTS

MAYFAIR SPORTING CLUB. Black tie dinner boxing at The Café Royal. Please Telephone: 020 7388 5999 or you may go to www.mayfairsportingclub.com

EYE SERVICES

SEEKING WORDS for brochure, leaflet, flyer, mailer, autobiography, story that must be told etc? The Other Writer is a professional wordsmith with 30 years' experience, who will turn your thoughts into perfect prose. The Other Writer. Tel: 01252 821 168 or at http://www.theotherwriter.com

CALL OVERSEAS for national rate! Dial 0870 7947990 followed by the full international number and you're connected! NO ACCOUNT NEEDED! Full terms / destinations from: www.webstertelecom.com

SUSPECT YOUR PARTNER? Piece of mind reports direct from surveillance / investigator at low prices. No job too small. Tel: 07745 154 846. www.sbi.uk.net

EYE NEED

DAMSEL IN DISTRESS (writer) needs rescue and care by knight in shining armour (patron). Contact: adiamondchick@gmail.com

SEVERELY DYSLEXIC BOY needs funding for specialist school. Any help appreciated. Reply Box 135391.

AMBITIOUS student film-makers need £2000 to complete exciting surreal film. S/C: 40-17-39. A/C: 51339974.

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY MASTERS – my dream. £12,000 needed for fees and living. S/C: 30-95-99. A/C: 00303388. Heartfelt thanks.

ESSEX GIRL needs 2K to expand mind through travel. S/C: 40-17-47. A/C: 61077473.

LONG-TERM ME SUFFERER, housebound, on benefit, needs £700 for recovery programme. S/C: 40-20-09. A/C: 31375636.

EXPENSIVE TART, too old to work. Needs money to fund schooling. Desperate, please help. Reply Box 136569.

60K CRIPPLING DEBT after being conned by abusive gambling husband. Grateful for any help to move on. S/C: 30-92-13. A/C: 02785899.

FEMALE, desperate for rent deposit and better life. So grateful. S/C: 82-65-15. A/C: 00043956.

DESPERATE WELSH LAD needs help. Drowning in debt. S/C: 30-67-72. A/C: 18022460. Lloyds TSB.

£5000 or any contributions to launch my invention for poor creative lady. S/C: 30-99-55. A/C: 10188668.

PLEASE HELP: £40,000 needed to purchase house, any help gratefully received. SC: 52-41-20. AC: 87071185.

BETRAYED BY EVIL MOTHER, now skint – thanks. SC: 20-05-06. AC: 40223328.

£300 to help raise £15,000 for art school. Anything appreciated! HSBC, S/C: 40-41-44. A/C: 21485512.

EYE CONTACT

ADDITIONS: A discreet, ' loving', adult newsletter, popular for over 10 years. An understanding service for lovers. Tel: 020 8905 3304 or 020 8958 9657.

LONESOME OXBRIDGE BLUES? Why not meet somebody new at www.BluesMatch.com

RUSSIAN LADIES, attractive and sincere seek relationship/marriage. Meet many Russian ladies in Britain. Unlimited introductions. Excellent success rate. IFM. Telephone: 01708 478 697. www.intromoscow.co.uk

BEST SINGLES magazine in universe. Free details PTP(PE) P. O. Box 40, Minehead, TA24 5YS. Tel: 01643 709 509.

REFRESHING ORIENTAL MASSAGE, South Manchester. High quality and professional. Open 7 days, 10am-12am. Tel: 07765 258 671.

LOVING LINKS. UK's leading discreet adult dating service since 1994. Unique top level, one-to-one matching service and fast online email system. Call David for a chat: 08456 440 919.

TAMARA: professional, mature, Malaysian visiting massage. Tel: 07930 386 378.

NOMOREFROGS.CO.UK Online dating without the pondlife. Get MORE, with nomorefrogs!

BEAUTIFUL THAI BRIDES. Do you want to marry a respectable Thai lady? Phone 0121 744 4804 or 07779 632 026. www.thai-wives.com

SPEED DATING – The new way to meet other professionals: 20+ three-minute face-to-face dates in one night. Telephone: 08458 385 600. www.speeddater.co.uk

MALE, VERY GOOD-LOOKING, sporty, adventurous, unusual and absolutely hilarious in bed. Seeks female who wants to laugh. Tel: 07951 428 316.

MEET ORIENTAL LADIES on line. www.jasminonlinedating.com or call 01483 284 123.

WWW.B-MINE4EVER.RU Beautiful women of Crimea looking for British husbands / partners.

ENGLISH AROMATHERAPIST: Indulge yourself in Chelsea. Tel: 07932 939 227.

AROMATHERAPY: CLASSY, LATINO, professional lady to visit you in the Oxfordshire / Gloucestershire area. Call: 07900 840 310.

RELAXING, LEISURELY, SWEDISH massage by two qualified ladies. Tel: 0870 232 2007. Lancaster Gate / Paddington.

MILLIONAIRES and high net worth individuals. Global matchmaking, partner head-hunting and life-style service. Seventy Thirty is a sophisticated matchmaking service designed to assist successful men and women achieve quality relationships. See our main advertisement on page 34. Tel: 020 7863 8880. www.seventy-thirty.com

EastDateWest is a members' dating club for Orientals living in the UK looking for Western partners. Telephone: 020 7351 0750, (London). Telephone: 0161 629 9584, (Manchester) www.eastdatewest.com – now with online videos!

SASHA, FEMALE THERAPIST in Berkshire, offering a totally relaxing holistic experience to relieve all tension. 07905113440

MENNA MATURE mixed Oriental visiting aromatherapy. Professional service. Tel: 07837 560 761.

I AM 45 YEARS OF AGE, dark blonde female, who would like to meet a man to share quite simply doing nothing much. Reply Box 136266.

BLISSFUL RELAXATION in Berkshire: For a professional female aromatherapist to relieve tension, call 07960 939 130.

TREVOR HOWARD (48) seeks Celia Johnson for brief encounters. Good sense of humour essential, kinky boots optional. Northants. marhill65@hotmail.com

SMOOTH, PRESENTABLE MAN seeks seriously hirsute oman. Reply Box 136574.

For display advertising call Robert Beckman 020 7878 2303

SINGLE, ATTRACTIVE, professional woman, 41 seeks similar male for fun relationship. thackerberry@hotmail.com

AMIABLE MALE, 60, solvent, occasionally assertive, capable of wit and culture, seeks compatible female for caring relationship. London Essex. Reply Box 136612.

TALL, SLIMMISH, non-smoking, fit, professional guy, 55, author, linguist, seeks easy-going female for fun liaisons, anywhere, for photo: hutsonj72@hotmail.com

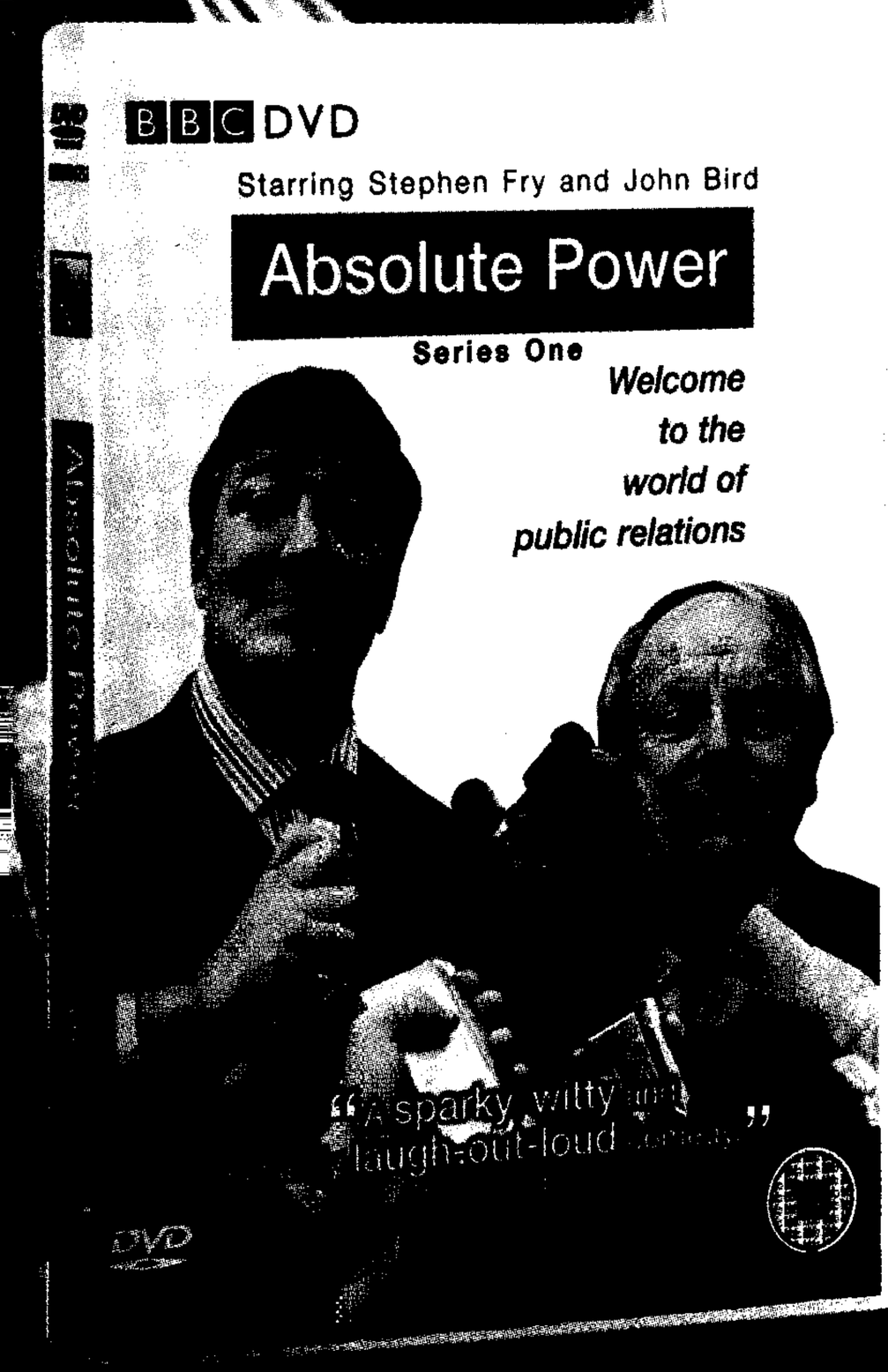
EDUCATED, PROFESSIONAL MALE, (41), seeks fun dalliance with attractive and intelligent female. London-based – amusement and frolics assured. Contact: zarquon42@hotmail.co.uk

BBC DVD

MORALLY BANKRUPT

CA$H RICH

PR means never having to say you are sorry...



MVC

OUT TO BUY FROM 18 JULY AT pay less discover more **AND ALL GOOD DVD STOCKISTS**

stores nationwide www.mvc.co.uk

Based on an original idea by the Wright brothers.

In 1903, Orville and Wilbur used a wind tunnel to create the plane that made man's first powered flight. In 1947, our aircraft engineers honed the wing-like body of our first car in the same way. A unique understanding of aerodynamics has kept our cars flying ever since. For more information, visit your local Saab retailer, call 0845 300 9395 or visit www.saab.co.uk

The Saab 9-3 Sport Saloon, from £16,995 with 3 years free servicing*.

Saab 93

9 770032 888112 32>

OFFICIAL FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES FOR SAAB 9-3 SPORT SALOON RANGE IN MPG (LITRES/100KM): URBAN 20.2 (14.0) – 37.7 (7.5), EXTRA URBAN 39.8 (7.1) – 60.1 (4.7), COMBINED 29.4 (9.6) – 49.6 (5.7), CO_2 EMISSIONS 154 – 232 G/KM. Model illustrated Saab 9.3 Aero – on the road price £24,995. All prices correct at time of going to press. *Free servicing offer is applicable to all new Saab 9-3 Sport Saloon and 9-3 Sportwagon models, and constitutes payment by Saab for all routine servicing required in line with the manufacturers recommended service schedules for up to 3 years or 36,000 miles, which ever comes first. Vehicles must be registered and serviced by a UK Saab Authorised/Franchised Retailer. The owner will be responsible for all parts and labour items which fall outside scheduled servicing. The benefit of free servicing remains with the registered vehicle throughout the 36,000 mile/3 year qualifying period, transferring to successive owners. This offer excludes Saab 9-5 Saloon or Estate and Saab 9-3 Convertible models. Offer applies to eligible vehicles ordered between 01/07/05 and 30/09/05 inclusive, regist?ered when the vehicle is available or delivered before 31/12/05. This offer is not available to fleet users or purchasers within fleets of over 25 vehicles, company operated personal lease schemes, or to purchases made under General Motors Partners, Associates and Retailer Programmes or the Mobility & Motability Schemes. Offer may, at the Retailer's discretion, be used in conjunction with specific Retailer offers available during the offer period. The promoter is Saab Great Britain Limited, 150 Bath Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 4LB. Offer subject to terms and conditions and availability.